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THE
FALSE STEP.

VOL. II.



THE
FALSE STEP;
OR,
THE HISTORY
OF
MRS. BRUDENEL.
A NOVEL.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N :

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T H E
FALSE STEP, &c.

L E T T E R L I.

Mr. Bever to Lord Musgrave.

SHE is found, my friend: but in what a situation for *me*! She is married; actually married, and has fairly jilted me. The Devil take the whole sex I say: and yet, were they all to be doomed to destruction this instant, I would freely offer up my life to save *her*. Never any thing was half so lovely as she appeared. But where, how did you find her? Why, where I least expected, at

VOL. II. B Bristol.

Bristol. The husband, d—n him, had carried her to that place for her health. No symptoms of sickness, however, were visible in her face; there was only a delicate languor diffused over her countenance, which gave a thousand charms to her whole person, which I had never before observed in it. I never, indeed, saw her in *such* a situation. People may look upon dress as nothing, and say that beauty requires no ornament; but I am of another opinion. I have been of no other opinion since I have seen Mrs. Brudenel. Curse on the name! I cannot think where she picked up the fellow. But to go on with my narrative. I will be regular if I can. No matter how I got to Bristol; there I happened to be in a few days after my return from Paris, and, of course, went to the Rooms. Scarce had I been in them two minutes before I was struck at the appearance of Lucy,
 leaning

leaning on the arm of another very agreeable woman, but not so beautiful as this witch. Imagine my surprise to see her, after the fruitless search I had made; to see her enter the Rooms with a composed air, elegantly dressed, transportingly lovely. I ran, I flew to her, hardly knowing what I did. Her face was instantly covered with blushes; she looked embarrassed. I seized her charming hands, and stammered out something by way of apology for what had passed at our last meeting, and endeavoured to make it up with her in the best manner I could.

She replied, after a little hesitation, during which she was, I suppose, contriving how she should, in the most effectual manner, silence me, that I was mistaken in her.

The Devil I am, thought I! That lovely face is so deeply engraven on my memory, that I should not easily forget it, if my beating bosom did

not sufficiently inform me, that she is mistress of all its emotions. I told her indeed pretty plainly, before all the company, of whom I was as utterly regardless at that moment as if they had been so many cabbage-stalks, how desperately I was enamoured with her.

To my extreme confusion, she pertly answered, " I am married, Sir."

Let me perish, if I believed her! I looked upon her reply as purposely invented to give me uneasiness; but when she craned up her pretty white neck still higher, told me again that she was married, and mentioned her husband (d—n him!) and her happiness, and so forth, and desired me to take no further notice of her; and when she afterwards, joining her party, walked out of the Rooms, I began to think she had acquainted me with nothing but the truth; but if I don't make her pay for all this!

Her

Her unexpected intelligence, indeed, threw me, at first, into such an agitation that I was incapable of knowing what I said or did; but as soon as I recovered myself a little, and became cool enough to enquire into the information I had just received, I heard it authenticated by many persons whose veracity was indisputable. I found, in short, to my excessive mortification, that Brudenel, the very Brudenel who left *Rome* two days after we arrived there, and who was so much admired by the women, had actually married Miss Hamilton. How I stamped and swore at this intelligence! I am half-distracted. Something must be done to annul this h——h marriage. I must get possession of her, if possible, though I can never enjoy peace while she loves this fellow; and I am pretty sure that *she does* love him dearly. She was, indeed, exceedingly surprized and embarrassed at

the sight of *me*: but her embarrassment did not seem to arise from love, it was rather occasioned by terror: yes, she appeared in the most terrified condition, and looked very desirous, trembling all over, to get away from me. Some time ago, she was as fond of *me* as a woman could be of a man. O memory! tormenting memory! but she is, doubtless, like the rest of her vain sex: she only wanted to share my name and fortune. Under the mask of virtue, how much rank pride and vanity do women, in general, conceal? Their confounded vanity makes them ever restless to procure themselves ho—nour—able settlements. How studious are they to render their dress striking? How much pains do they take to paint their faces, and to braid their hair; and how artfully do they roll their eyes, in order to allure some poor fellow, who has a fortune sufficient to gratify

tify all their wild wishes ? An alliance with a family, which can make them appear in a consequential light, is most ardently desired by them. When their first wants, however, are supplied, they are, by no means, contented ; new ones crowd fast into their minds ; and their husbands, poor Devils ! are only *tolerable* in their eyes, while their purses are open to them. How often do we see a woman, basely availing herself of the generosity of a husband whom she *bates*, in order to bestow favours on the man whom she *loves* ? Almost every female in the kingdom acts upon a mercenary plan, as soon as she puts on her hanging sleeves. Between friends, I have seen so much of the sex, that I am determined never to marry a woman with nothing. The majority of women are so insolent and extravagant, that there is no enduring them. I was fool enough, I con-

fess, to believe that this Lucy really
 loved me ; fondly too ; but I was,
 you see, cursedly mistaken. *Her*
 behaviour has made me quite des-
 perate. I don't care what I do.
 And yet I cannot exist without this
 charming girl. You cannot ima-
 gine how inviting her appearance
 was ? I will endeavour to describe
 it, that you may not accuse me of
 being deeply in love without reason.
 She had a muslin gown hung upon a
 white silk, with here and there a
 leaf and flower of gold, as if acci-
 dentally thrown in ; her petticoat
 was pale pink, and her shoes, cover-
 ing the smallest and prettiest feet in
 the universe, (the feet of a Spanish
 or of a Chinese woman excepted)
 were white satin, with pink roses ;
 over this petticoat was a sprigged,
 muslin apron, laced ; and across her
 swelling bosom was carelessly twisted
 a white gauze handkerchief ; her
 lovely, auburn hair was dressed with-
 out

out powder, long ringlets of which wantoned upon her snowy neck ; on her shining hair, she wore a bonnet of entire black lace, which, by shading her fair face a little, only shewed it to the greater advantage. I absolutely thought I gazed upon a divinity. Musgrave, no mortal was ever half so lovely. And must all these charms be devoted to Brudenel alone ? must he alone enjoy them ? No, certainly. I will have *my* share of them, *coute qui coute*.

L E T T E R LII.

Capt. Hamilton to Mr. Ross.

THIS Miss Ellison conducts herself with a discretion which is actually insupportable. What a ridiculous puppy was I to fancy that she was partial in my favour ? No such thing. *She* in love ? No, my friend : the tender passion can

never disturb *her* bosom, who always appears with a laughing ease in her countenance. What shall I do with her? I should rather say, what shall I do with myself? I could reproach her, quarrel with her, break off all connections with her. I had rather tell her a thousand times, how well I love her; I had rather praise her, admire her, nay kiss her; but this confounded prudeness of hers. Why, why, did it seize her, just when I was come almost to a positive determination to open my whole heart to her? You cannot conceive, Harry, how this vivacity, in which, however, I find numberless charms, distances me. I am quite another creature. I am no longer the man I was in the post-chaise: I make no more attempts to touch her than if she was my grandmother; and yet she is so civil, and so polite, that I cannot, reasonably, find fault with her neither. Well then, I have nothing

thing to do but to be altogether as discreet as herself, and to try to out-do her in prudence. But, hang it, I heartily wish people would be a little less *correct* in their behaviour. 'Tis extremely pleasing to play the fool sometimes; and the wisest, the best, the greatest men, have been commended for knowing how to lay aside, with propriety, their intellectual dignity, and to *trifle* agreeably. Why then cannot Maria condescend to trifle now and then? I will not call her Miss Ellifon, because I wish not to cherish this *humour* in her. Why will she not give the reins to nonsense, and encourage me to be as nonsensical as herself? “ *Nonsense*, according to a celebrated writer, is eloquence in love.” Would you believe it, I have been with her above half an hour in the garden, without coming within half a yard of her. We walked, very *prudently*, in two parallel lines. Such is my
B 6 situation,

situation, at present, with my delightful girl : for delightful she is, in spite of her *outrageous* discretion. Adieu.

L E T T E R LIII.

From the same to the same.

SO. I thought things could not always continue in the same train. When I grew quite tired of acting the *wise* man, she seemed, to my no small satisfaction, to be rather inclined to be less *heroic* in her behaviour. Just at that agreeable juncture, a little event happened, which produced an alteration in *her*, consequently occasioned a change in *me*. A troublesome fellow having long admired her, became the other day impertinently pressing. She exerted herself in an unexpected manner, and reprimanded him pretty smartly. When she had chastised him,

him, she complained to *me* of his insolence. “ If you put yourself in a passion with every man who admires you, said I, you will find yourself perpetually disturbed.”

You are as provoking as my *tormenter*, replied she, with a smile. I took the hint, catching her hand, I kissed it; she drew it back and frowned.

Will you believe me? I grew angry in my turn. We have been mighty cool, mighty civil, mighty distant ever since. But though I play the *insensible*, with so much attention to the *character*, that neither *she*, nor any body else, suspects me of *acting a part*, I fear I shall not be able to sustain it long; especially, if she continues to treat me with that particular kind of politeness, which is the most striking mark of indifference. Were she angry, were she dejected, I should certainly conclude that she loved me; but she is

as

as good-humoured as ever with me, and with every body else. She has such a flow of spirits, that I am thoroughly persuaded, she is not at all affected by my behaviour. All this *mere politeness* is, undoubtedly, right on both sides ; as we were not born for each other ; but it is not in the least agreeable ; it is extremely disagreeable ; I think, I am sure, I suffer no small uneasiness from it, and find it very difficult to keep up my good humour, and to behave with the common complaisance due from our sex to the other. If things continue much longer in this provoking, perplexing way, I shall quit my lively *tormentress* for ever. I am heartily tired of waging war against my inclination. To sigh, to die, to look, to speak, to touch ; and yet to *forbear*. My situation is insupportable, and I must—I know not what to do ; but something must be done, and speedily.

L E T-

L E T T E R L I V .

Mrs. Brudenel to Miss Sommers.

I AM exceedingly disconcerted, my dear Patty. I have, already informed you of the disagreeable interview I had with Mr. Bever at the Rooms. From the coolness with which I behaved to him, from the disgust, indeed, which I discovered, I flattered myself I should hear no more of him. Imagine, then, my astonishment and vexation in the receipt of a letter from him ; a letter which ought not to have been written to a married woman ; a letter, which no married woman should have received. But I could not help it, the *addresse* was in an unknown hand ; I, therefore, opened it very innocently. When I had opened it, I read it, not from any satisfaction which I felt at the flattery it contained,

tained, but merely to see how I should conduct myself, in order to prevent any farther proceedings of the same kind. I cannot describe the uneasiness which it has given me. I have prevailed on Mr. Brudenel to leave this place to-morrow, without telling him, however, my reasons for requesting so expeditious a removal. Will not neglect, contempt, and the utmost indifference make the insolent man, (is not he truly insolent to write to a woman, who is blest with such a husband as Mr. Brudenel ?) make him see his error, and cease to torment me, either with his appearance, or his letters ? Tell me, my Patty, if you approve of my conduct, and believe me to be,

Your's, ever affectionately,

L. BRUDENEL.

P. S. I destroyed the affronting letter immediately : I could not think of transcribing it for your perusal.

L E T-

LETTER LV.

Mr. Bever to Lord Musgrave.

I HAVE entered upon my new operations, but I fear they will be as unsuccessful as my former ones. I have written—Yes, Musgrave, I have ventured to write to this haughty married dame; lovely, still lovely, with all her pride, all her virtue. Can she be less lovely, you will say, on account of the *first*, which adds *dignity* to *softness*; or, on account of the *last*, without which, at least, without its appearance, no woman can long please a man who has the slightest degree of delicacy? You entirely mistake me, my Lord, if you imagine that I do not reverence *both*, even in this Mrs. Brudenel. (I can hardly yet write the name with tolerable composure.) Yes, I would ever have my charming

ing Lucy, (by that appellation alone she shall always be distinguished by me) I would have her sufficiently *proud*, to reject every man except myself; and *virtuous* enough, to be inviolably attached to *me*. Could I but revive the passion she *once* felt for me, I should be very well satisfied: for we then should soon (a woman's wit is at all times ready to be employed against her husband) be mutually happy. To forward my designs, I wrote the most passionate letter, which a heart, penetrated with love, as mine is, could dictate.

“ And you expected an answer ? ”

Unquestionably, but no answer came. The day following, I frequented the Rooms, the walks, every place in which I thought I might probably see her, in order to discover her feelings by her eyes. I ran about, however, all day to no purpose; she did not make her appearance.

ance. The next morning, to my excessive surprise, I heard that she had left Bristol. There's a witch for you! But I'll be even with her for this trick. Perhaps her husband may be at the bottom of the affair. I must endeavour to find out whether *he* has had any hand in it, and then manage matters accordingly. Excuse my breaking off abruptly. When you have any business similar to mine upon the anvil, I will readily excuse even a *Lacedemonian* letter from you. And so, my dear Musgrave, adieu.

L E T T E R LVI.

Miss Ellison to Mrs. Catesby.

Lime Park.

YOU insist upon my writing to you, though I have nothing to mention but our return hither. Mrs. Brudenel, on a sudden, complained that neither the air nor the
wa-

waters of Bristol agreed with her; and so we left it; that's all. Now, are you not disappointed? Did not you expect some other intelligence? I am out of humour, Harriot. Hamilton is going to leave us. Yet why should I be out of humour at his departure? it will be a movement very favourable to me, as I am strongly inclined to be pleased with *him*, and he is, at present, not at all pleased with *me*. His departure will be favourable to me, as I may have an opportunity by it to forget him. But can I easily forget him? Every day do I ask myself this question, and every day make a negative reply. It is impossible to forget him. Yet time and absence may lessen my prejudices in his favour: they will certainly be eradicated by his *indifference*. No, Harriot, I was mistaken when I fancied I know not what: he never felt any tender sensations on *my* account. *That* behaviour,

viour, on his side, which was so well calculated to fill my head with flattering ideas, is, I suppose, the behaviour he assumes before every woman. Most men are extremely addicted to adulation in our company; either *pour tuer le tems*, or to gratify our supposed expectations, or to see how far vanity will carry us. Be it as it will, my eyes are now opened. Yet my heart sinks within me, Harriot, when I think how egregiously I have been duped. I have duped myself, I must confess. I foolishly thought that the man was in love with me, and he was perfectly indifferent about me all the time. However, neither my pride nor my vanity is wounded upon this occasion: the truth is, I wish to reflect upon my want of judgment. Will you not deem me immensely silly, to wish that I had made an impression upon this insensible? Capricious, inconsistent, I will allow

low him to be; but I still think him, in the brightness of his understanding, and for his insinuating powers, superior to any man I ever met with. Yet why should I, indeed, desire to make myself particularly agreeable to a man whose affection I must not return? Let me, therefore, be contented with things as they are, and be satisfied that every thing is for the best. Let him go. Let me forget him. Forget him? Can I see him depart, after having spent so many agreeable hours with him, without being sensible of the loss of his society? I *must feel*, Harriot, but I must also carefully *hide my feelings*.

L E T-

L E T T E R LVII.

*Captain Hamilton to Mr. Ross.**Lime Park.*

I HAVE summoned up all my resolution that I may quit this place, or rather, Miss Ellison, with fortitude ; but I cannot conquer the debility of my mind upon this occasion. I have pleaded business, though the time allowed me for pleasure is not yet expired. But where can I spend my hours more agreeably ? Wherever I am, I shall certainly remember, with regret, the hours I have spent with Maria. And yet, I cannot, without the highest folly, encourage the passion which devours me, and which becomes more violent, as I am obliged to confine it to my own bosom. Besides, if I am uneasy now, while she distinguishes no man by particular civilities,

civilities, how inexpressibly wretched shall I be, when she actually admits the addresses of a lover, who makes acceptable proposals? These reflections are distracting; I must fly away before *bad* becomes *worse*. I perform, it is true, the part of an *indifferent*, with a tolerable grace; but when I am alone, I cannot help seeing, with fancy's eye, Miss Ellison before me, as she first appeared to me, when I foolishly flattered myself, that she was partial in my favour. Had it been proper for me to address her at *that* time, I might have succeeded; but now it is too late. Why then do I linger? The intreaties of my sister, the repeated requests of Mr. Brudenel, detain me. They both urge me very earnestly to remain here, but Maria does not breathe a desire to retard my departure. No; the halcyon days, during which my company was solicited by her, are all gone,
 never

never to return. Never will such
days be again enjoyed, by

Your unalterable,
but unhappy friend,
W. HAMILTON.

L E T T E R LVIII.

Mr. Bever to Lord Musgrave.

I HAVE followed Lucy hither,
and have taken up my residence
in the neighbourhood of Lime-Park,
being determined to watch her
closely, and to see whether she flies
me, terrified by that bug-bear vir-
tue, or whether she still loves me,
and is only afraid of being detected
by her husband. I have known ma-
ny a girl who would freely have
taken her swing of pleasure, had
she not been as timorous as she was
tender, and fearful of being found
out. However, I see no reason yet
to flatter myself, that Lucy is one of
C these

these women. I actually believe that she does not dislike the fellow whom she has married. I will not say she *loves* him, because I would not even think of her loving him, lest I should be driven to commit some act of violence. I will not say she *loves* him; but while I was wandering round the Park last night, in hopes of getting a sight of her, I saw her walking with him, and leaning on his arm. He bestowed a thousand endearments upon her, and she made not the least opposition to them; nay, she seemed to be pleased with his caresses. The satisfaction which she discovered in her looks, fired my my soul with jealousy: I never felt such torturing sensations before; sensations which will torment me, till I enjoy a happy *tete-a-tete* with her. But how is this to be brought about? I am quite unable to tell you: I only know that whenever I see her, though at such a distance
that

that I have a very imperfect glimpse of her person, I am stimulated to procure a nearer view of her. What would I not give to take the liberties to which I saw Brudenel admitted this morning? I was not near enough, to be sure, to see if she returned his fondness with equal ardor, but I saw enough to drive me to madness.

L E T T E R LIX.

From the same to the same.

I GOT an interview. But such a one! h——ns! I am distracted! What a cursed change is there in this once dear friend, now false, now faithless girl! But I will tell you the whole affair, if I can bridle my impatience.

I made my fellow Coates strike up an acquaintance with Brudenel's gardener; and with the assistance of

a handsome bribe, gained a promise from *him*, to let me into the garden the first time he thought his lady would make any stay in it alone. She is a great admirer of flowers, it seems. Accordingly, I waited a whole week for Brudenel's leaving her, which he scarce ever does. At last, one evening, Giles, the gardener came, and informed Coates, that his master was to go to meet some gentlemen of the county, about making an alteration in the road, which went through part of *his* grounds; adding, that Captain Hamilton, (Lucy's brother) who had been at the *Park* some time, was gone to London; and that Miss Ellifon, (a friend of Brudenel's) had promised, at his lady's desire, to pay a visit for her, as she was not very well; he concluded his information by saying that his lady was then in the garden with a book. Things now began to have a favourable appearance. I fol-

followed Giles into that part of the garden which led to a rustic temple. "You'll find my lady there, Sir," said he, and immediately withdrew. I never trembled, Musgrave, so much in my life: my limbs shook, and were hardly able to carry me to her.

When I entered the temple, I beheld her sitting in a pensive attitude, with a gracefulness in her whole figure, a dignity in her mien not to be described. I was awed by her appearance. I was, for some moments, utterly unable to speak to her: during these moments, her eyes were fixed intently on the volume in her hand. Yet, while I stood hesitating, I undoubtedly threw time away; that time which should have been otherwise employed. I could not tell how long she might remain in her then situation. At last, mustering up all the courage in my power, I advanced, softly,

and sunk down at her feet before she had observed me. This movement, however, drew her eyes from her book. Alarmed at the sudden sight of me, she screamed and hurried from her seat. I stopped her, gently seized her hands, and strove by every soothing art I was master of to detain her, to no purpose. She struggled violently, and made all possible efforts to disengage herself; but I was too strong, as you may suppose, for her; yet I was too fearful of hurting her to put out all my strength, though I still held her hands in mine, and, at the same time, insisted upon being heard. I then told her, that I would leave her, as she was cruel enough to request my absence, deeply sighing while I spoke.

Finding that she could not easily get rid of me, she at length became less refractory, and suffered me to conduct her to the seat, on which she

she was reading when I entered the temple, yet not without a very discomposed countenance ; not without a tremor through her whole frame, which increased on my pleading my cause, and endeavouring to convince, with all the elocution in my power, that her precipitate flight from me had rendered me eternally miserable ; as she had, cruelly misconstruing my behaviour to her, formed an opinion of me which I in no shape merited, and which had driven her to dispose of herself to another man, to the entire destruction of my peace. I afterwards gradually insinuated, that though her marriage had made me extremely wretched, she might alleviate the pain I endured on her account, if she had the smallest compassion for me, by allowing me to see her sometimes, when it was most agreeable to her and convenient. What do you think was her answer

to this tender request, uttered with the most impassioned softness that a lover ever felt? Drawing up her head, instantly she replied, that my company would never be agreeable to her, and that therefore she desired me never to come in her company again; she at the same time made a second effort to leave me. I stopped her, and plainly told her, that I could not possibly live without seeing her; and that I should be prompted by despair, if she continued inflexible, to take some measures, which might occasion her no small disquiet.

“ You may do as you please, answered she,” with a disdainful coldness which froze my soul.

With equal haughtiness, I replied, I could not help *so* replying, “ As *you* please, madam; but Mr. Brudenel shall know every thing that passed between us.”

“ Mr.

“ Mr. Brudenel, Sir, said she, *does* know every thing that has passed between us. Do you imagine that I have been so mean as to make any concealments, from a man so every way deserving of the utmost affection and sincerity on my side ; a man so truly amiable, and who has been so kind, so generous to me ; a man——”

“ Hold, madam, hold,” interrupted I, half mad to hear her run on so fluently in favour of a man whom I could have pistolled, “ it is enough ; I am not to be told what Mr. Brudenel is. I know well enough what were his charms in *your* eyes. A new lover has always new attractions, added I, with a sarcastic laugh.”

“ You are mistaken, Sir, replied she ; it was not a love of variety, but my detestation of *your* behaviour to me, which made me fly from *you* ; and Mr. Brudenel’s excellent principles,

ciples, extreme generosity, and most affectionate tenderness to me, were the charms which attracted me to *him*."

The last words almost deprived me of breath; they were softly articulated, and in a manner which plainly indicated a real passion for her husband (d—n the successful fellow!) they pierced my soul; they almost drove me to distraction. I could hardly keep down my resentment, which, if I had given a loose to it, might have frustrated all my schemes, though indeed I cannot, at present, tell what my schemes are, so much am I perplexed. I really know not how to proceed, nor what measures to take to dissolve an attachment which renders me absolutely wretched. Some thing, however, must be planned; ay, and instantly too. But to go on with my story. Just when she had uttered the last cutting word,
I heard

I heard a rustling among the trees : at first, reflecting only upon my cursed disappointment, I disregarded it ; but as it increased, I started. Instead of Brudenel, whom I, to say truth, expected, Giles appeared ; but in a point of view in which *I only* could behold him. He made me a sign to retire with the greatest expedition. Wild with love, and furious with despair, I tore myself from the cause of all the misery which I felt, though I could willingly have expired at her feet.

When I came to the gardener, whom I secretly d—d for drawing me from the presence of his too lovely mistress, he told me, that his master was returned, and that he would be with her in a moment ; adding, that he was in a fright lest I should be discovered, and intreating me to make haste, as he should certainly lose his place, if I was found in the garden. But will not

she tell this happy, this admired husband! Undoubtedly *she* will. I am tortured while I think of it. Yet I will not give her up tamely. I will die a thousand deaths first.

LETTER LX.

Captain Hamilton to Mr. Ross.

Lime Park.

I AM come back hither, you see, though I had absolutely determined not to return. But I could not possibly bring myself to be long absent from Miss Ellison. It was with great regret, the greatest I had ever felt before, that I left her, tho' *she* had made no objections to my departure. I believe, indeed, that the composure with which *she* saw me leave the *Park*, hastened my re-appearance at it: as I began to fear, from her *indifference*, that I had quite lost the little share of her esteem

teem which I once, I flattered myself, enjoyed. I could not bear the reflections crowding into my mind on *her* account, and therefore turned back with a precipitancy which made me more than ever sensible of the strength, as well as of the sincerity of my attachment to her. I pleaded, indeed, the pressing invitations of Mr. Brudenel and my sister, to visit them again soon, in order to apologize for my quick return; yet joy sparkled in her eyes when I approached, when I embraced her. You will, perhaps, be surprized at my venturing upon such a liberty; but my sister and she were together. I kissed Lucy as usual; and I could not, without behaving in a very stiff, formal manner, have overlooked Maria. It would have been ridiculous in me, to have made a distinction between two women who are upon the familiar footing of sisters. You may urge, it is true,
that

that my *politesse* to Miss Ellison was quite unnecessary : but I was not at all in a ceremonious humour ; I always think, that formality is no part of good breeding. I therefore flew to Maria, caught her in my arms, and kissed her heartily. She blushed, but made no resistance ; she did not even correct me with one of her discouraging frowns : cheerfulness sat smiling upon her brow. She never appeared so handsome in my eyes : she never conversed with more freedom and ease.

Brudenel informs me, that Lucy does not seem to be quite well : I have observed her attentively ; she appears neither well, nor happy : and yet she has a husband capable, I think, of inspiring the coldest breast with tender sensations : however, her present indisposition may be, perhaps, not disagreeably accounted for. I told my brother so.

But

But we passionately enamoured lovers (surely I may rank myself among that number) are ever ready to be alarmed.

L E T T E R LXI.

Mrs. Brudenel to Miss Sommers.

I HAVE gone through a very trying scene, my dear friend; and I was so much disordered, so much distressed by it, that I could not immediately think of writing to you about it. I was, indeed, for some days indisposed: Mr. Brudenel's affectionate behaviour greatly contributed to my relief, but I am still far from well. You cannot imagine how terribly I have been alarmed.

Mr. Brudenel happened to be engaged to spend a few hours from home without me; rarely (is he so engaged) Miss Ellison had an engagement another way. My brother

ther was gone to London. Being thus left alone, I took up a book, and went into the garden, intending to sit in one of the temples and read, till either Mr. Brudenel or Maria returned. When I had been there about a quarter of an hour, though I was too agreeably employed to think much concerning the time, I was suddenly interrupted: and I was also alarmed by seeing Bever on his knees before me. Never was astonishment equal to mine at the sight of him: it far exceeded that with which I was seized when I beheld him in the rooms at Bristol: I did not expect indeed, to see him *then*; yet his appearance at a publick place was not at all wonderful: but Bever in our garden! Bever at my feet! How was I struck at the sight of him! And upon so improper a spot. I scream'd and rose precipitately, in order to quit the temple: he caught my hands

hands eagerly, and held me so fast that it was not in my power to get from him. I grew quite scared at his impetuosity, at his furious looks, and at his violent expressions. At last, on his earnestly and repeatedly declaring that he would not leave me till he had been heard, I determined, (what could I do in so singular a condition?) - to submit. I therefore sat down; but I am sure, with the greatest reluctance; and *that* reluctance increased every moment. He entered upon a long vindication of his conduct with regard to me, and concluded his defence with insisting upon my giving admittance to him whenever it would be most agreeable and convenient to me. You may easily suppose that my impatience to be disengaged from him was doubled by so daring a proceeding. After having told him that his visits would at no time be agreeable to me, he stopped me again,

gain, on my breaking from him, and insolently said, that he would not, that he could not live without me ; adding, that if I refused to permit him to see me now and then, he would acquaint Mr. Brudenel with every thing which had passed between us. So impudent a declaration roused my resentment, I confess, and I was ready to burst with anger ; yet I strove to controul my feelings, as I found myself entirely in his power at that time. I wished, however, to see somebody come to my assistance, though I dreaded the presence of my dear Mr. Brudenel just at that juncture. What had I not to apprehend from a rencounter between *him* and Bever ? and how was I tortured to think of the *former's* life being in any shape endangered by the carriage of the latter ? Checked by my alarming apprehensions, I endeavoured to keep my temper, so far as to say nothing

thing to incense him. I only informed him that I had not in the least imposed upon Mr. Brudenel; and that I sincerely and affectionately loved him for his own amiable qualifications, as well as for his tender and generous behaviour to *me*. My last words threw his mind into a commotion not to be described. Luckily for me, at that instant, he suddenly hurried away from me (though I knew not what occasioned his abrupt departure) and left me in a situation truly disquieting; I may add, without making use of too strong an expression, tormenting. I did not recover from the severe shock I had sustained, even after Mr. Brudenel's return, who having kindly hastened home to me, was both disappointed and concerned to find me strangely disordered: he imputed my altered appearance immediately to illness, but he more than once asked me afterwards, if any
 thing

thing had happened to disconcert me. I knew not what reply to make : my dear, I was greatly embarrassed. I thought it exceedingly improper, cruel indeed, to alarm him with what had passed : I could not, you know, have communicated the *temple-interview* without firing him with resentment against Bever's behaviour ; and, in consequence of that resentment, his life, a life so deservedly dear to me, might have been endangered. I therefore, mentioned nothing about the affair ; but I wished, a thousand times, that I had not been obliged, by prudence, to be guilty of hypocrisy.

Pity me, my dear ; providentially placed, as I am, in the most enviable situation, I cannot enjoy it. Bever, the unworthy Bever, has filled my mind with ideas which almost distract me. What have I not to fear from such a man ? Am I not greatly to be pitied ?

L E T-

L E T T E R L X I I .

Miss Ellison to Mrs. Catesby.

HAMILTON is returned, child, and has thrown me into such a flutter that I scarce know what I am about; and yet I was delighted to see him: I will not deny it, my dear. He entered Mrs. Brudenel's dressing-room with inexpressible grace, flew to his sister, and kissed her. He then, will you believe it, turned to *me*, and took the same liberty. Is that a proper expression, Harriot? I was, I confess, pleased with his behaviour, though I am almost ashamed to tell you so. However, I am not ashamed to own that I am really glad that he is come again, for Lucy has, on a sudden, lost her spirits; she is not well, and Brudenel is so anxious about her, that I have very little of her society.

Yet

Yet while I acknowledge myself charmed with Hamilton's conversation, I am afraid to trust myself with him. What will become of me? He behaves, indeed, with a great deal of distinction, but he throws out things, I am sure, to disguise his real sentiments; I am therefore upon my guard as much as possible, and have even had strength of mind enough to mention my return to Windsor to him. You will say, that I knew, before-hand, my sister and Brudenel would not let me go; and I certainly mentioned my departure very slightly. Yet I will make one vigorous effort more to conquer my folly; this ridiculous folly, if I give way to it any longer I may not be able to gain a victory over it. A lively indifference shall succeed this strange agitation of spirits, these violent emotions which give me so much disquietude. Whenever I see or only think of Hamilton, I am—
well,

well, I must have recourse to all my old amusements ; I must sing, dance, and laugh this formidable fellow out of my head and heart.— Oh ! Harriot ! in what a fine condition has love brought your

MARIA ?

L E T T E R LXIII.

Mr. Bever to Lord Musgrave.

THERE is no doing any thing with this charming Lucy. I am, therefore, resolved to attack her husband, and to see what effect *jealousy* will have upon him. I am, perpetually, upon the watch, and follow the *happy pair* (confound them !) wherever they go : they are always together ; so that I cannot be seen by the *lady* without making myself noticed by the *gentleman*. This jealousy-scheme seems to have a face, I will pursue it. They ride
out,

out, generally, in a morning ; so do I : they either visit or walk in an evening ; and I am seen, either on horseback or in my whisky, or on foot near them ; for in their very park I can frequently see them—thanks to my friend Giles. You may be somewhat surprised at this information, but when you hear how all my operations are conducted your astonishment will vanish.

When the Brudenels are abroad the way is open to *me* as well as to them.

“ But how do you manage when they are in their own grounds ? ”

Why then I bribe Giles to let me in as a stranger who wants to see the park and gardens.

“ You cannot be always a stranger ? ”

No ; but I am repeatedly introduced as a gentleman who is highly pleased with the flower-garden, who doats on the exotics, who extravagantly

gantly admires the order which every where appears, and who is never weary of seeing such beautiful spots. Pray give due praise to my address.

By this mode of proceeding, I saunter about every evening, when the Brudenels are at home, near the very places where they walk or sit. Giles does not know my real name ; and if Lucy should tell her husband, and make him impertinent, I think I know how to deal with him. But I can see clearly she rather wishes to have him ignorant of our rencontre, and takes the greatest pains to conceal the emotions, occasioned by my appearance, from him.

There was a fair in the neighbouring village, a few days ago ; Brudenel and his family were at it ; I followed them about from place to place, still rivetting my eyes on Lucy. They stepped into a shop full of all sorts of toys. I stuck close

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to

to them. Brudenel purchased several trinkets, and gave them to his Lucy; at last she took up a pocket-glass, and having surveyed it two or three times, shewed it to him; she then laid it down, and asked for something else. I instantly exhibited myself, took up the very glass she had laid down, looked at it eagerly, and, transportingly, pressed it to my lips. She blushed, and turned away her charming eyes with contempt, whether real or affected I will not pretend to determine; I wish I could be sure of the latter.

Brudenel whispered in her ear, looking full at me. A deeper blush overspread her face. I gazed still more ardently at her; she then took him by the arm, and walked out of the shop. He turned back several times, and measured me with threatening eyes, which seemed to say, "You are a d—— troublesome fellow". However, I made no alter-

teration in my behaviour ; I paid no sort of attention to him, but continued in a rapturous attitude at the sight of his wife, and threw all that tender satisfaction into my features, which successful lovers feel on being favourably regarded by their mistresses. This must do, I think, in time. If I can but mak the *husband* heartily *suspicious*, the business will be compleatly finished.

LETTER LXIV.

Miss Sommers to Mrs. Brudenel.

I SHOULD have answered your last letters, my dear Mrs. Brudenel, sooner, had I not been to make a visit to a lady about fourteen miles off. As soon as returned, I took up my pen immediately to write to you. I am extremely sorry to hear that Bever has behaved in so improper a manner, that he still follows you,

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and

and that he takes such indiscreet steps to throw himself in your way. His garden-proceedings are quite inexcusable ; I am afraid they will be attended with very disagreeable, if not fatal, consequences. You have nothing, however, to do, I think, but to be alone as little as possible ; or endeavour to find out by whose contrivance Bever has been introduced into the garden, and to acquaint Mr. Brudenel with the information you receive concerning him. Do not be apprehensive, my Lucy, of Mr. Brudenel's life being endangered by any intelligence you communicate to him. It is highly necessary that he should be warned against the designs of this licentious man. Besides, let things take what course they will, you may, with reason, approve of your own conduct when you have put your husband upon his guard, from whom no secrets should be concealed. You may

may then sit down with an applauding conscience, and wait the event with patience and submission. On the other hand, should any unwished-for consequences arise, from Mr. Brudenel's being ignorant of your conniving at Bever's attempts to see you in private; should he hear that you *have* actually been in private with him, and should he prove jealous, you may be brought into a very unhappy situation. I am thoroughly sensible that you mean well by not speaking about Bever to Mr. Brudenel, but by reflecting a little, you will, I dare say, be convinced that it is better to make a frank and open discovery of what has passed. Brudenel will then be enabled to hit upon some method to get rid of a man, whom you, undoubtedly, ought never to see but in the most public manner. You would certainly be happier were you not to see him at all any where.

Excuse the shortness of this, I have only had time to set down a few admonitions which I thought might be serviceable to you. When I have more leisure, you shall receive a longer letter from

Your ever affectionate friend,
M. SOMMERS.

L E T T E R LXV.

Mrs. Brudenel to Miss Sommers.

I THANK my dear Patty for her kind, her well-meant advice, but I fear it is come too late. Had I acquainted Mr. Brudenel with Bever's first surprising me in the temple, I should have acted, I believe, the most prudent part, but I have many doubts now with regard to the propriety of making discoveries concerning him. After having seen Bever so many times, I may, I think, by the discoveries
you

you mention, confirm those suspicions which Mr. Brudenel seems to harbour against him ; and I may also render myself suspected. Scarce can I stir in my own garden without seeing this impertinent man. He has, some how or other, made an acquaintance with the gardener, who has told us, that the gentleman is a Mr. Brown, very curious in plants, and very desirous of walking in our grounds sometimes.

In consequence of this information from Giles, Mr. Brudenel desired him to tell the unknown gentleman, that he should be glad of his company, not in the least imagining, at that juncture, he paid any particular attention to me. Giles replied, that he was a gentleman of a very retired turn, that he wished not to make a new acquaintance ; that his whole pleasure was in his garden, which he was altering, and that he wanted to take some hints

from our's, as he was pleased with the disposition of it. This intelligence was sufficiently satisfactory to Mr. Brudenel, but it was very far from being so to me, who believed that Bever had other designs, though he knew not how to carry them into execution without my concurrence.

On our meeting at a fair in the next village the other day, Bever's behaviour was extremely indiscreet, and Mr. Brudenel was alarmed at it, and told me he was an impudent fellow. Were I now to inform Mr. Brudenel, that the man who has alarmed him, is the man who treated me in so scandalous a manner, and that I have lately been in private with him, he would certainly imagine, and not without some reason, that I gave him encouragement to haunt me. I must, therefore, amuse him as well as I can, and endeavour to keep myself out of Bever's way as much as possible : when he finds that I am
studious

studious to avoid him, I hope he will be weary of following me.

Am I never to have the pleasure of your company here? I have had a very kind letter from my mother, which has given me a great deal of pleasure.

L E T T E R LXVI.

Captain Hamilton to Mr. Ross.

MISS Ellison is become so seriously indifferent that I cannot bear it. She has totally changed her behaviour. I now, indeed, begin to think that she never distinguished me from any other man; and I cannot imagine why I fancied I was particularly noticed by her. Surely, surely when a man is in love he loses his senses. However, I recollect *some* circumstances about which I could not possibly be mistaken; but her behaviour to me, perhaps, was

only put on merely for her own amusement; she wanted to see the extent of her power over me; she wanted to see how great a fool she could make me, by feeding my vanity. And yet I don't know how to reconcile such a carriage with her real character and sentiments; for she seems to be naturally of a frank, candid, good-natured, generous disposition. Be it as it may, however, she discovers almost every hour so many fine qualities, so many pleasing attractions, that it makes me mad to think of losing the small share of her esteem, I once, so fancy tells me, enjoyed. Well! if I dare not aspire to her love, I may certainly, without being criminal, hope for her friendship; and is not the friendship of such a woman next to her love? Are they not, indeed, nearly similar? I will endeavour, therefore, to secure her friendship; under the specious title of *a friend*,
I may

I may have numberless opportunities to make myself both agreeable and useful to her; and imperceptibly worm myself into her affections. But is this mode of proceeding to be justified? Is it fair, is it honest, to attempt to gain her heart, and by so doing lay her under a sort of a necessity of bestowing herself upon me, or at least render her incapable of being happy with a man more upon an equality with her in point of fortune? Shall I not act in a selfish, ungenerous manner, by almost obliging her to put me in possession of her person, as she is by birth and fortune, reasonably entitled to a husband in a far more exalted sphere of life? And yet, on the other hand, will rank and fortune give happiness? Is it from riches, splendor, and parade alone, that we are to expect felicity? Certainly no. But shall I exhibit any proofs of my love, by wishing to

deprive her of what the generality of the world call blessings ; and what, indeed, properly managed, *are* blessings, merely to gratify my own desires ? Heaven, however is my witness, that I am not under the influence of *one* mercenary motive when I wish to be united to her. Had she not been bred up in a style of life superior to mine, she might think herself happy in living agreeably in that to which I have been accustomed. But we cannot alter the nature of things. The world will not be of *my* opinion, nor will *her* sentiments, perhaps, correspond with mine upon this occasion. I cannot, therefore, seek for the gratification of my wishes, without being plausibly charged with having a design upon Miss Ellison's fortune. To be thought mercenary will vex me more than any thing. Let me then learn to be satisfied with her friendship ; let me be solicitous to
 merit

merit *that* ; if it should ripen afterwards into love, why, who can help it ?

L E T T E R L X V I I .

Mrs. Brudenel to Miss Sommers.

I WISH, my dear Patty, that I had received your friendly advice before, or at least that I had followed it the moment it arrived ; for I very much fear that Mr. Brudenel is displeased with me ; and I had rather die than incur *his* displeasure. During these two or three last days, he has, I think, looked more serious than usual. He is not actually unkind, but not *so* kind as he used to be.

Yesterday he came into my dressing-room, and sat down, not close by me, in his customary way, to lean on my shoulder, to take hold of my hand, to play with my hair, to kiss my
my

my cheeks, and to give me twenty other little proofs of his tenderness. He sat down at a distance from me.

So, Lucy, said he, gravely, you never told me that the man who has long followed you every where, was not a Mr. Brown, but *the* Mr. Bever, from whom you received so many insults, and who still seems inclined to treat you again in the *same manner*.

I started: I felt my face glow, and I doubtless appeared in the utmost confusion. I was cruelly embarrassed. At length, lifting up my head, I replied, "I beg your pardon, Sir, but indeed I thought it better not to mention him; not even to think of him, if possible."

This answer, you will say, was a very silly one; but when we are taken by surprise, we hardly know what we are about. "You cannot then

then help *thinking* of him, Lucy?" said he calmly.

"To tell you the truth, Sir, answered I, blushing still more, I never *should* think of him, if he did not put himself in my way."

Here I stopped. I did not know what to say; and yet I wished to make some apology for my conduct. I wished, but I could not tell how, to plead in my own favour. My conscience reproached me, for having kept a secret from my husband, which I should have, at first, discovered to him. It appeared to me indeed of no consequence; nay, I thought I acted meritoriously by concealing it from him; but I was under a capital mistake. Oh how I wish that I had made no concealments with regard to Bever! I am severely pained, my dear Patty, because I see clearly an alteration in Mr. Brudenel's behaviour to me; an alteration the more alarming, as
it

it certainly prognosticates the decay, if not the total loss of his affection. I had better have died a thousand times, than have acted so very indiscreetly ! and yet, my friend, I have not, intentionally, erred. However, I strove to repair the mischief I had done : rising up, I went to my dear Brudenel, still more dear to me than ever, because I found that I could not be happy with the least diminution of his affection. He sat, apparently buried in thought, I stood by him some time, he seemed not to see me ; I laid my hand upon his shoulder, but he did not raise his eyes ; I then stooped down and looked fondly in his face ; “ Are you not well, my Love ? ” said I, taking his hand.

He rose immediately, and with much abruptness left the room.

I was exceedingly struck at this sudden change in his carriage. Tears rushed into my eyes, and I could
not

not recover myself for a good while ; yet I thought it best to endeavour to be chearful, that he might not imagine I was vexed at any thing he had mentioned. But I am not able to be chearful.

We had company till we returned to our chamber. Then, with my heart and my eyes full, I threw my arms round his neck while I stood before him, for he would not take me in his lap as he used to do, and told him, that I only forbore to acquaint him with every thing relating to Bever, because I was afraid of making him uneasy.

He was silent a considerable time ; during which I continued to caress him. Then, disengaging himself from my arms, he coolly said, “ Go and undress yourself, Lucy ;” adding, with a kind of sigh, “ If you *do* feel for him, you cannot help it, you know.”

“ In-

“ Indeed, indeed I don’t, replied I, I do’nt think about him ; I never *have* thought of him since I have been your’s : Pray believe me, my dear Mr. Brudenel.”

“ Go to rest, Lucy.” No other words could I get from him. I obeyed, but I could not close my eyes ; nor did he sleep at all well : I took no other notice of his wakefulness, however, than to discover my fears lest he should be indisposed. Yet he does not behave to me as he used to do : his altered behaviour grieves me beyond expression. I love him most tenderly : have I not a thousand reasons to love him ? how then can I bear to think that I am suspected of preferring a man so every way unworthy of my attention ? What would I not give to recall the time when I appeared to be so dear to my amiable Brudenel ?

L E T-

L E T T E R LXVIII.

Mr. Brudenel to Sir George Milbourne.

YOU complain of my being a bad correspondent. I wish I may not give you an opportunity to load me with fresh reproaches. I am not, indeed, the man I *have* been. Oh Milbourne! I once thought I was in the possession of the loveliest, the kindest of women. I was supremely happy, because I believed that her affection for *me* was equal to my sincere regard for *her*. I fear I have been cheated by a delusive dream. Yet how can I blame her? can she force inclination? Is it in our power to love whom we please? No, no; it is utterly impossible. She can no more help loving *Bever*, than I can help doating on her. But this rhapsody is quite unintelligible to you. Know then,

then, my friend, that this Bever, the man, the villain I may add, who decoyed my charming girl from her family and friends, and tempted her to consent to a clandestine marriage, has pursued her hither, unable, I suppose, to live without her any longer. He has found means to introduce himself into my garden, under a feigned name, and follows her every where. She cannot help his following her, you will say : true, but she could have communicated to me what she knew relating to his disguised appearance ; she could have told me, that the man who appeared to me as a stranger, was actually the *Bever* who had so grossly treated her. And yet even his dishonourable behaviour to her, could not eradicate the first impressions which his insinuating manners had made upon her yielding heart. I often thought, George, before I was in love, that it was very great misfortune

tune to be possesst of too much *sensibility*. Young, innocent girls are particularly to be pitied, with too great a share of it. How could my lovely Lucy, with all her tenderness of heart, guard herself against the flattering blandishments of a designing fellow, formed by nature to please, and tutored by art to betray? A fellow who, I plainly see, leaves nothing undone to improve his *personal* advantages, and is so studiously solicitous to engage her attention that he cannot but prove successful, by regaining a heart which *was* once, and which *will be*, I fear, his own; though the dear girl's principles would not suffer her to comply with desires which she looked upon, in consequence of her attachment to *them*, as criminal. How beautiful is virtue? How enchanting is that delicacy which obliges us to oppose the stream of our pleasures, even when they are innocent? However,

ever, though I am willing to believe that my wife errs not intentionally, I cannot see, without the most poignant anguish, that she loves Bever; that she cannot suppress her partiality for him, and that she is even sorry her prepossessions in his favour are not to be controuled. Can I then quarrel with her? especially when I see at the same time that she is an object of the greatest compassion? She did not, I know, even attempt to deceive me. She refused me; refused me when she most wanted a protector; when she was cast off by every body; when she had neither money nor friends. If she could be frank and open at such a trying juncture, ought I to harbour suspicions against her now? ought I not rather to pardon small failings, by considering that she had fortitude enough to fly from temptation when she was peculiarly distressed? Yet I must *feel*, I must *lament* my inability
to

to touch so charming a heart, in the manner I wish. At least, I must sigh at not having been the first to make her sensible of the pleasures of the tender passion. How unfortunate then am I in having fixed my affections on a woman, who has it not in her power to return my ardent love! in having made *that* woman my *wife*, who cannot help feeling the tenderest regard for another, and who would, I am assured, love *me* as well if she *possibly could*!

L E T T E R LXIX.

Captain Hamilton to Mr. Ross.

Lime Park.

WELL, my friend, you may congratulate me upon the success with which my operations have, hitherto, been attended. I have secured the friendship of this delicious woman; and you are not
to

to be told, " That friendship with woman is sister to love."

I came down to this place a little by surprise though ; I very much question whether I should have carried my point by an *expected return*. But I must let you in to the whole affair. Miss Ellison had been either so very cool, so affectedly negligent, or so immoderately merry, that she seemed to have trifled away all *sensitment*. There was no enduring such a mode of behaviour ; it actually made me half angry with her ; yet I got nothing by appearing chagrined at it : the more solemn I looked, the merrier *she* grew. I found, therefore, that my carriage would not do ; and I was really in an unhappy situation, for I began to fear that I had totally mistaken her character, and that she was absolutely as indifferent as she appeared to be. I was pained, and too much so not to wish for an *eclaircissement*.

I could

I could not, however, immediately seize a proper opportunity. At last, chance I believe, rather than design, (on *her* part) threw us together in the garden. We walked for some time without entering into conversation. She seemed to be quite regardless of me, while I, by the most expressive looks, and repeated attentions, strove to recommend myself to her notice at least. I gathered flowers for her; I presented fruit to her; she accepted them, and the other, indeed, but looked, at the same time, as if she had a mind to refuse both; but I pressed them upon her with so respectful an earnestness that she could not, with any decency, reject them. She drew up, and with a serious face said, "I have flowers enough in my dressing-room, and have already, since dinner, eaten too much fruit." I then caught her hand, and stammered out, "Do not refuse me every favour I ask;

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especially when my esteem, my respect (I dare not say more, circumstanced as I am) will, I hope, prevent me from doing any thing to render myself unworthy of your compliance with my requests.

She blushed ; she held down her head ; her bosom heaved ; her hand trembled, and she was violently agitated. Her agitation convinced me that she was by no means either *insensible*, or *indifferent* : all her emotions convinced me, that nothing but discretion hindered her from disclosing sentiments, most probably, similar to my own. I was, therefore, in consequence of the tumults which I had excited in her breast, determined to proceed in the same way : and I so happily persevered, that I actually drew from her a promise of unreserved friendship. What a delightful acquisition is such a friend ! Do you not think that a mutual confidence between

tween us, will, in time, produce a closer connection? I assure you, I have great hopes of it. I have considered and re-considered this affair. If Maria really loves me, no matter who has the money. But then shall I not be deemed a mercenary fellow? No matter what appellation is bestowed upon me, if I am happy, and if I can make the woman happy, on whom I doat; and I really am vain enough to think I have it in my power to make that woman so. You would not charge me with self-conceit, if you had seen how sweetly she smiled, and what an air of satisfaction was diffused over her features, when this point, to me so important a point, was settled: when she had given me leave to look upon her as my friend, and consented to receive me as her's; with her eyes brightened, and with the softest accents, readily permitting me also to press

her hand to my bosom, and to my
lips. What say you to such a friend-
ship, Harry? Is it not superior to
—But while I sit scribbling to you,
I lose several rapturous moments.
I see her from the window, near
which I am writing, sauntering up
and down a shady grass-walk in the
garden, with a book in her hand.
That book I shall very soon take
from her, and then she will be quite
at leisure to look upon,

Your ever affectionate friend,

W. HAMILTON.

L E T T E R LXX.

Mr. Bever to Lord Musgrave.

I BEGIN to conceive hopes. I
told you in my last, that the
husband grew suspicious: to in-
crease his suspicions I desired Giles
to circulate my real name, and to
add, that I had my reasons for
changing

changing it, which no longer subsisted. When I had taken this step, I asked Giles if his master ever wanted to know who I was. He replied, that his master had not only asked several questions concerning me, but that he had been exceedingly inquisitive. In consequence of this information, I gave several hints, which if related, would be sufficient to blow up his brains at once, without my supplemental appearance to put the mischief into motion. However, I shall watch every opportunity to see how they operate, *propria persona*.

Giles tells me that his master has forbidden him to let me into the gardens, &c. &c. again, but I am as much in them as ever, though not actually in his sight. I continue to be sometimes stealing away as if I had enjoyed an interview, or as if I had been waiting in hopes of one. These contrivances are carried

on *without*, as Giles would be turned away on my being discovered *within*.

Brudenel begins to look very discontented ; Lucy also is become dejected and anxious : possibly the love she once felt for *me* is, by my perseverance in following her (the ever sure and certain method to win a woman's soul) returned in her gentle bosom. What a glorious thought ! I will give a free indulgence to it ; how transporting ! it must be so ! Is it absurd or unnatural to suppose that she may still retain her former regard for me, or that it may be renewed, as she cannot but see with what steadiness as well as ardor I pursue her ; for I take care to throw myself in her way almost whenever she stirs out of the house. This assiduity of mine must, unquestionably, make the strongest, the most lasting impression upon her. A woman is never more flattered than by finding that even difficulties and rebuffs

buffs rather than increase than diminish her lover's attachment. I believe, indeed, that Lucy has as little vanity as any of her sex, yet there is always a sufficient quantity in every woman to encourage the attentions of an agreeable man; and how often does the pleasure which she receives from his solicitude about her, produce a passion tender as his own? Let the woman, therefore, who intends to keep clear of gallantries, be very careful not to deal much in what is commonly called *flirtation*; for it will certainly, believe me, lead her into tender embarrassments.

But to return to Lucy: my whole employment shall be to put myself in *her* way, and into her husband's: by alarming *him*, I shall make him jealous; and consequently disagreeable to her: she will then be sensible of the difference between a surly, suspicious husband, and a soft, sub-

missive lover. When she is thoroughly sensible of that difference, and of the advantages which may arise from an exchange, I may, possibly, prevail on her to go off with me a second time. If I do not, after a *second* elopement, secure her *person* as well as her *heart*, set me down for the most egregious fool that ever existed ; an idiot, a driveller.

LETTER LXXI.

Miss Ellison to Mrs. Catesby.

I HAVE taken up my pen three or four times to write to you, my dear Harriot, but have been as many times ashamed to tell you what a progress Hamilton and I—Pshaw, why did I mention myself, when I only intended to talk about *him*. 'Tis a terrible thing, child, to have always such a pretty fellow in one's head; yet I should be tolerably well
off

off to have him only *there*. He is in my *heart* too. My heart is full of nothing but this insinuating Hamilton. He has absolutely frightened me into a friendship for him. You may laugh, Harriot, I am positively serious.

A few evenings ago we had a strolling *tete-a-tete* in the garden—by the way, these *tete-a-tetes* are rather dangerous with such charming fellows—however, I declare to you, that I was never in a less humour to have love made to me in my whole life. He accosted me with so serious a face, with so much softness in his manner, with such a tender expression in his features, his voice was so faltering, his hands were so tremulous, and his eyes so imploring, that I was utterly incapable of articulating a refusal. Thank Heaven! he only solicited my friendship; had his demands rose higher, I should have been a lost woman; for he actually

tually hinted at something more, and talked about being cruelly circumstanced, and I cannot tell what. I was, indeed, almost deprived of my reason, and can, therefore, give but a very imperfect account of what passed between us. I really would not have had you seen me, at that instant, for more than I can name. You would not have recognized your lively, laughing Ellison, in the tame, languid figure I made; blushing, trembling, and agitated with emotions which I had never felt before; emotions which reduced me to the very condition in which he wished, I suppose, to behold me, as he knew that it would render me incapable of resisting the eloquent timidity of real love. In short, Harriot, I became more knowing in one hour, with regard to the sensations which fill an enamoured heart, than I should have been in seven years, without this unreserved *eclaircissement* on Hamilton's

ton's side. Quite unprepared, therefore, my dear, to oppose his importunities ; importunities the most bewitching to be conceived, I yielded my hand to *friendship*, and my poor, softened heart, I fear, to a tenderer passion ; for our interviews, I think, grow more and more interesting. I am very sure that my attention is diverted from almost every pursuit, useful and laudable. My music is neglected ; I rarely play or sing, but at Hamilton's request ; my drawing is seldom thought of, but whenever I have my pencil in my hand, I begin, insensibly, to trace out upon paper, a tall, well-made figure, with brilliant eyes, and a dimpling mouth : To my needle, indeed, I am most attached, at present, because I can *sew* and *think* at the same time : as to my books, I have frequently attempted to read them, but in vain, Captain William Hamilton appears in every line ; I therefore, throw

E 6 them

them aside almost as soon as I have taken them up. Yesterday I peeped into Akenfide's Odes, and bewildered myself with the difference between love and friendship, and friendship and love. My *friend*, having surprised me *so* bewildered, gently seized my book, read a passage extremely to the purpose, called me his Dione, and convinced me that friendship and love were synonymous terms. He actually begged so hard for my Odes that I was weak enough to let him have them; he is to give me Hammond's Elegies in return. Do not you apprehend that our future conversations will be truly pathetic? Tell me, sincerely, Catefby, should you not be in a fair way to lose your senses if you had such a *friend* as mine always at your elbow? Pray answer my question in the affirmative, and then you will make *vast* allow-

allowances for the situation and behaviour of

Your ever affectionate,
MARIA ELLISON.

P. S. Brudenel and Lucy have lost all their chearfulness, I think, or I do not see so clearly as I used to do. This man, indeed, engages my thoughts so much that I cannot sufficiently attend to any thing ; yet I believe I am not mistaken with regard to the Brudenels, and I wonder at the alteration in them both. I begin now to have a glimmering idea of the difference between love and marriage. Sorry shall I be to find two of my best friends giving me a disgust to the former, and a dread of the latter, by a change in their behaviour.

L E T-

L E T T E R LXXII.

Mrs. Brudenel to Miss Sommers.

I BECOME more and more unhappy, my dear friend. Mr. Brudenel's discontent and coolness increafe. I do not know what courfe to take. I think I had better tell him every thing that has paffed concerning Bever lately; poffibly he may have heard it from fomebody, and imagines that I intended to deceive him. I wifh you were here to affift me with your advice. I know it is your opinion that I fhould have acquainted him with our interviews at the time they happened; but in what light muft I appear to him, by acquainting him with them fo long afterwards? Yet Heaven is my witnefs, that nothing but my regard for his happinefs and fafety fealed my lips upon the occafion.

sion. However, the disclosure of the truth can surely do no harm now. I'll try : but I want courage to open my heart to him. He who was always so tender and kind, so candid, so willing to listen to me, so eager to hear me, is now indifferent and negligent ; rather inclined to be harsh, serious, silent, and ready to leave me upon every trifling occasion. He never appears in the least desirous to stay with me ; before I can bring myself to speak to him he is gone, or else looks earnestly at me, not with his customary pleasure, but with a sternness as if he wanted to read every thought in my heart. He *shall* read every thought in it ; I will conceal nothing from him. Whatever may be his conjectures concerning my behaviour, I have ever been truly attached to him. But though he is so much changed, he rather seems unhappy himself than angry with me. I will, therefore,
ven-

venture to speak. I hear him coming up. How my heart beats ! I will put this by till another time.

In Continuation.

I HAVE taken up my pen again. I could not bring myself to tell him, Patty. He looked fiercely at me, I thought. I had opened my mouth to speak, but a hasty question ("What's the matter with you?") intimidated me. I hung my head and was silent. How am I, how is Mr. Brudenel changed ! More interruptions.

In Continuation.

I HAVE been a good deal perplexed, my Patty. I am always perplexed *now*, I think. Soon after Mr. Brudenel left me, the gardener, who has lived with him several years, begged to speak to me.

I let

I let him come in. He told me that his master had been very angry with him, and that he had turned him away; intreating me, at the same time, to speak a word in his favour, that he might recover his place, as he well knew I could do any thing with his master. I sighed at the poor fellow's mistake. Once, indeed, I could have promised myself the influence expected from me by Giles. However, as he had lived so long in his place, I was not willing to refuse him; I had also a mind to try if I had really lost all my power; yet, that I might not be too precipitate, I asked Giles why his master parted with him? He replied, "My master, Madam, was displeased at my shewing the garden to strangers; but I am determined never to do so again, and I have assured him I will not; I hope, therefore, Madam, that you will have the goodness to speak for me."

This

This request appeared to me so proper a one, Patty, that I went immediately in search of Mr. Brudenel, (after having earnestly desired Giles to follow his master's orders.)

He was walking backwards and forwards in the library ; when I entered the room he turned with a smile, took me by the hand, pressed it, and asked me if I wanted him.

“ Yes, indeed,” answered I, with an affectionate look, returning the pressure he gave me.

“ My dearest, loveliest girl, said he, how charming is this kindness.” He then placed me in his own chair, drew another close to me, threw his arm round my neck, kissed me several times, and asked me if I came on purpose to look for him.

I repeatedly told him, that I had wished very much to see him. He was almost transported out of himself at that answer ; he surveyed me all over with eager eyes, commended
the

the taste I discovered in my dress, and then added, " But what dress can give additional beauty to this enchanting form ?"

Excuse me, my dear Patty, for committing his praises to paper : you will see the propriety of my taking notice of them, before you reach the end of my letter, and will not, I dare say, charge me with vanity.

" No ornament, continued he, can be wanting, where all is beauty, all is grace."

He then launched out into the most extravagant encomiums upon features and complexion. He told me that my eyes were too bright to be looked on, and that when I smiled tenderly on him, he was quite lost in extasy.

I was, you may believe me, my Patty, charmed with this encouraging behaviour, after having been so long, according to my calculation,
so

so long chilled by his indifference; I modestly returned his endearments, animated by the sincerest affection.

In this manner we sat seemingly delighted with each other. For my own part, I felt the truest satisfaction; never had he appeared so amiable in my eyes. His returning love was so overpowering that I could not refrain from tears: those tears so deeply affected him that he hastily demanded the cause of them; and upon my informing him that I could not possibly express my happy feelings in any other way, I thought he would have devoured me.

When we had a little recovered from the intoxication occasioned by our mutual raptures, I began to plead for Giles.

With my arm thrown fondly round his neck, with my face almost hid in his bosom, I told him, that while I was so happy myself, I ought

ought to endeavour to make other people so. I then mentioned the poor fellow's request ; intreating him at the same time to let the gardener keep his place, as he had promised not to be guilty again of the fault for which he had been discharged.

Scarce were those words out of my mouth, when Mr. Brudenel rose in a hurry, and almost threw me from him. " How, Madam, said he, with a stern countenance, and a terrifying voice which made my whole frame shake ; how, madam, is it possible that *you* can intercede for such a fellow as Giles ? Can *you* desire me to retain him in my service ? My fears then are not without foundation."

I was so astonished, my dear, so frightened, that I knew not what reply to make. My looks, I believe, strongly expressed my feelings ; I was ready to sink ; I could
only

only say, and in accents hardly audible, that I was sorry I had done wrong, as I only meant to plead for the poor fellow, who had been an old servant.

“ Yes, answered he, Giles has *well* served me ;” and immediately left the room, with a precipitation as if something of a dreadful nature had suddenly struck him. I had it not in my power at first to follow him, and to enquire into the meaning of the instantaneous and amazing change in him.

When we met again, I ventured to beg him to forgive me, if I had taken too great a liberty.

He repeated the word *liberty* rather inwardly ; then lifting up his hands and eyes, he darted from me.

Now, my dearest friend, tell me, if you can, in what shape have I been blameable. I am sure I have not, intentionally, erred. I was exceedingly happy before I happened
to

to mention the gardener. *When* I shall be happy again! whether I shall be *ever* happy again, Heaven knows: at this moment, there is not a more wretched creature breathing, than

Your very unfortunate friend,

L. BRUDENEL.

L E T T E R LXXIII.

Mr. Brudenel to Sir George Milbourne.

IN what a delightful illusion have I been lost! What happy moments did I enjoy, while I thought myself beloved by my Lucy; while my Lucy, my *wife*, (with what transport I once wrote *that* word!) hung over me enraptured, as I fondly imagined; and, with her snowy arm round my neck, even watered my bosom with the tears of fondness, I felt myself in Elysium. How enchantingly lovely did she appear! With what apparent satisfaction did she

she receive my careſſes ! and with how winning a ſoftneſs did ſhe return them ! She ſeemed to be the happieſt of human beings, and I really imagined that I was the man of her choice ; I was ſure that ſhe had conquered her inclination for Bever, and fixed her affections on *me* alone. Juſt in the height of my endearments, juſt when ſhe had told me that ſhe could only expreſs her love for me with her tears, weeping while ſhe ſpoke ; O woman ! Artful woman ! ſhe ſtruck me dumb by aſking me to let Giles remain in my ſervice ; *that* Giles, that very Giles whom I had turned away for having introduced Bever into my garden, who could certainly come there only with a deſign to ſee her.

I ſtarted from her ; I even ſhook her off as if ſhe had been a viper whom I had miſtakingly cheriſhed in my boſom ; and demanded, as ſoon as I had recovered a little from
my

my surprize and vexation, how she could wish to have such a fellow continued in his place. I added a hint too, that my suspicions were but too well grounded; and left her immediately, lest my rage should get the better of my reason, and prompt me to say things concerning her, for the utterance of which I might be sorry afterwards. She cannot help it if she *does* love him: I know by experience, how difficult it is to remove a deep-rooted passion; and it is plain, her whole behaviour preceding her request, was convincing that she has *endeavoured* to love me. Very sorry was she, I dare believe, to have been the cause of any uneasiness to me, for when I saw her soon afterwards, she asked my pardon for having spoken of the fellow in a tone and manner which would have melted a savage. I confess I could not stand it. I was forced to leave her a second time. If I had

F — staid

staid, she would have unmanned me. She has unquestionably, no ill intentions, but possibly, her fruitless struggles against an inclination too strong to be resisted, prey upon her mind, and injure her health. Her conflicts may prove fatal to her constitution ; for the delicacy of the one is but little able to combat with the violence of the other. Dear however as she is still to my fond heart, I wish that I had not married her ; and yet, had I not married her, she must have been undone ; for I am persuaded that Bever never had any honourable designs. The man who can only *wish* to seduce the *wife* of another, must be a loose, licentious villain, and can have no real regard for any woman. Yet as I have fixed my heart upon an amiable young creature, who has it not in her power to give me *her's* in return, I shall lead a miserable life ; I shall be as wretched as she herself can be. I actually believe
that

that she is the most virtuous and discreet of women ; and that she would on no account, though she pines for this man who so cruelly wronged her, injure or deceive *me*. She will probably, therefore, fall a victim at last, though an innocent one, to this infamous fellow, who has entirely gained her affections. Happily, her virtue, excellent girl, triumphed over all his efforts to destroy it. How unjustifiable are we when we make any attempts to delude the young and unwary ; and to what miseries do not libertines frequently reduce the most amiable of part of the creation, by their unpardonable behaviour to them. If *we*, who are, in general not supposed to be susceptible of the *softer passions*, cannot keep them under the controul of reason, how should a poor, tender-hearted girl be capable of resisting them ? She is ruined by her sensibility. What praises then are

not due to *her*, who has rejected the man she loves, and who would rather give up her life than her honour. Full of veneration for the character of Miss Hamilton, full of love for her charming person, I ventured to marry her: but now, believe me, I fear that I have gratified my passion for her at the expence of her peace. Yet as there is no undoing what has been done, let me not blame her, who fought not to render me unhappy, but who, on the contrary, has behaved to me with the most noble frankness. Let me endeavour to be calm, and to try by every soothing art to lessen her disquietudes, and to make her satisfied with her situation. After having once loved her, I could never have married any other woman; yet for *her* sake, for the sake of *that* virtue which I revere, never will I again persuade a girl to part with it to *me*. When a man neither chuses
to

to marry, nor to live without women, there are always mistresses to be found; but there is no woman for me except Lucy, and no man for *her*, I fear, except Bever. How unfortunately circumstanced is your unhappy friend.

LETTER LXXIV.

Captain Hamilton to Mr. Ross.

I HAVE at last conquered all the scruples of my charming friend; she seems to be convinced that love is a necessary ingredient in the cup of happiness, though she does not chuse to make a *verbal* confession. When a woman of sense and delicacy *listens* to a tender conversation, she tells you in a very significant language, that she neither dislikes the subject, nor disapproves of the speaker. Yet though I have gained the first wish of my heart, by mak-

ing this amiable woman sensible of the passion I feel for her, I cannot feel perfectly happy while I accuse myself of seeking to reap advantages from her superiority in point of fortune. There is also a new trouble just risen to disturb me ; Brudenel and my sister seem discontented, either with each other, or with something which touches them both. Yet it is something which they do not chuse to communicate to their friends ; their friends consequently have it not in their power to assist them, towards the removal of the uneasiness which hangs upon them. Lucy appears melancholy, and in a bad state of health. She has never been quite well, indeed, since she left my father ; but I was in hopes that when she was fortunately married, and apparently satisfied with her situation, all her former anxieties were at an end. I was in hopes too, that with Brudenel's care and tender-

tenderneſs, ſhe would get the better of all her indifpoſitions. However, *he* looks *now* as unhappy as *ſhe* does. Dejection is viſible in his countenance, and diſſatisfaction appears in every feature. He ſeems, indeed, diſtreſſed at Lucy's ill health, and low ſpirits, and diſcovers a ſtrong deſire to procure her relief, or at leaſt eaſe; yet he alſo looks inexpressibly embarraſſed and diſquieted.

In Continuation.

MISS Ellifon prevented my proceeding, by aſking me to walk with her: how gladly would I be ſo prevented every hour! tho' I had, after mature conſideration, brought myſelf to a reſolution not to dwell continually upon a paſſion, which, in *my* circumſtances, might not produce happineſs adequate to my expectations. I love Maria with

the greatest sincerity ; I cannot therefore, but be anxious about *her* felicity : for whatever the most sensible and the most rational people may say against living like all the rest of the world, all are insensibly carried down the stream of fashion ; and who can assure me, that Maria, when married to *me*, may not sigh after the elegancies, the luxuries, which she may indisputably enjoy with another man possessor of a larger fortune than will ever come to my lot ? I had, therefore, I say, resolved to curb the extasies I felt at the particular indulgence with which she had favoured me ; but who so much in love as I am, can keep *such* a resolution ? I strove hard ; could a lover do more ? I appeared to be rather indifferent ; serious. I was really serious, because I could not help thinking on the Brudenels.

We strolled to a considerable distance from the house, before I attempted to open my lips.

Maria,

Maria, at last, after having several times looked attentively at me, said, " You are melancholy this morning ; has any thing happened to disturb you ? "

I answered in the negative ; and studied to conceal the thoughts which racked my mind.

She pressed me to unbosom myself with the sweetest importunity imaginable. " Do you act like a *friend*, Hamilton, continued she, by thus refusing to open your heart to *me*, who am so ready to sympathize in all your sorrow. "

This was too much. I was not proof against it. Her gentle behaviour, and the tender dejection which began to be spread over her before smiling features, would have moved a heart of marble. Eager therefore to relieve *her*, as I fancied, I hastened to relieve *myself* by telling her abruptly at once, that I wished I had never seen her, and that I

F 5 heartily

heartily repented of having made her acquainted with a passion, which, out of the sincerest regard for *her*, I was determined to conquer.

And what do you think was her reply? With a winning softness in her look and manner, and with an uncommon tenderness in her voice, she answered, “ Is this talking like a lover, Hamilton ?

I was almost gone again. Another look would have destroyed all the resolution on which I had plumed myself. I turned away my eyes a moment, and then seizing her hands, I replied, “ Yes, it is talking like a lover, the truest, the tenderest lover that ever formed pretensions to the most amiable of women. I am sensible, Miss Ellison, that it will never be in my power to make you an offer suitable to your fortune and rank in life; and therefore, I will relinquish all the hopes I had once fondly,

fondly, too fondly cherished, whatever it cost me ; I would rather lay down my life than act unjustly in any shape. Your merit, Miss Elifon, will certainly attach some man to you with fortune, and with connections suitable to your's, and whom you may yourself think every way deserving of you. I will learn, however mortified, to reflect upon your loving another, with a proper resignation to my fate, as another may be more able to make you happy than I am. At a distance, however, I shall rejoice at your happiness, even while I sigh at the occasion of it."

Here I stopped. I was really incapable of adding any thing more. I was too deeply affected with the thoughts of going to give her up thus for ever. Honour and justice required the sacrifice of my inclination ; but love told me that such a sacrifice was a dreadful one.

During these afflictive moments, I remained with my eyes averted from her. I had quitted her hands, and could no longer behold a face which had almost bereaved me of my reason; no more did I dare to touch the hand, with the pressure of which I had been half intoxicated. While I was in this situation I heard her sigh softly.

Supposing immediately that I had distressed her with something which I had said, I turned towards her again; I turned and saw her lovely eyes full of tears, through which she smiled with a tenderness that pierced my soul.

Holding out her charming hand to me, she said, " You have more delicacy, Hamilton, than any man I ever met with : Do you imagine that it is thrown away upon me ? I should indeed be unworthy of the great esteem you profess for me, were I not fully sensible of it. Af-
ter

ter having assured you that these are my sentiments, do you imagine I can be ever happy with another?"

Here she ceased speaking; our eyes met; *her* glances were sufficient to overturn my firmest resolves; there was no need of utterance; I could not, indeed, find words to express my feelings, but my looks declared my acknowledgments better than my tongue could have done at that time. She blushed, while the tears which had before only glistened in her eyes, now paced down her cheeks. I could hold it no longer. I caught her to my bosom, I even presumed to press those charming eyes, which wept on *my* account, with my lips. She suffered me to hold her but a moment; "Let me go, said she, possibly I have said too much, but I cannot repent of what has escaped me; only be discreet, and conceal our mutual sentiments from every body
for

for the present, and you may depend upon my having thought of a method to settle every thing to your satisfaction."

She now rose superior to all praise. I thanked her therefore, by promising to act agreeably to her desire in every respect; and as there was no body near, she permitted me to hold her hand in mine while we walked.

During our walk, I mentioned to her what I had observed concerning Brudenel and my sister, and my uneasiness in consequence of my observations.

She told me that she had made the same remark, and that she was truly grieved to see Lucy deeply affected at Brudenel's altered behaviour to her, in spite of all her efforts to conceal her feelings. He is jealous of her, I am afraid, added she, and I am sure her carriage is altogether unexceptionable. When I behold such capriciousness in people

ple after marriage, I am alarmed, and find myself afraid to venture upon matrimony, even with *you*, Hamilton, whom I take to be of a different disposition from Brudenel. When men love with violence, their expectations are seldom answered.

How, Miss Ellison, said I, do you pretend to insinuate, that I do not love *you* as well as Brudenel loves my sister ?

You have very different tempers, replied she, laughing ; *he* loves like a madman, with fury ; *you* like a rational creature, with moderation.

I doat on your idea of moderation, Madam, said I, smiling ; I shall take care not to be classed among the tame lovers, for the future.

Hold, hold, cried she, disengaging herself from me, you will let me see, I find, how dangerous it is to praise men ; but raillery apart, I do think that Mrs. Brudenel would
be

be much happier, if Mr. Brudenel's passion for her was less violent ; his excessive anxiety about her torments her instead of pleasing her ; and therefore, I charge you, Hamilton, if you are willing to keep my heart, to make *yourself* perfectly easy, and to let *me* be so.

With these words she broke from me, and ran down a walk which led to the house, making me a sign not to follow her.

Now, tell me, Harry, who can help loving so charming a woman ? There is a delightful vivacity in her mixed with an enchanting sensibility, and I *must* pursue her, so irresistible are her numerous attractions ; though I am thoroughly convinced, at the same time, that I should act the wiser part by flying from her ; but love, love—Adieu.

L E T-

L E T T E R LXXV.

Mrs. Brudenel to Miss Sommers.

PATTY, Patty, I have, at last, followed your advice. Heaven knows what it cost me; yet the consequences with which my compliance with it were attended, sufficiently proved the superiority of *your* judgment to *mine*.

When I had spoken to Mr. Brudenel in favour of Giles, he was exceeding cool to me, and rather appeared out of humour with me for some days. This behaviour of his pained me cruelly, I own. I was not conscious of having been in any shape blameable for pleading in favour of an old servant, who had lived with him long before I knew him; but as my intercession displeased him, I determined to speak no more in Giles's behalf. Having
made

made this resolution, I sighed secretly, I confess, to be forgiven ; every mark of negligence on Mr. Brudenel's side cut me to the heart.

He spoke to me yesterday in a tone unusually harsh. Miss Ellison was in the room too. I could not refrain my tears. As soon as Mr. Brudenel was gone, Miss Ellison attempted to comfort me. I told her, that having offended Mr. Brudenel, by speaking in his gardener's favour, I was afraid he never would forgive me.

" Pshaw, said she, with a good-natured smile, he will not be angry with you, my dear, he is only jealous."

" Jealous ! said I, I speak to no body."

" No, answered she, but your old admirer, Bever, is always following you every where, and he may possibly think that you see him oftener than you do."

This

This hint so strongly corresponded with your opinion, my amiable friend, that I thanked her for it, and assured her, that I would immediately convince Mr. Brudenel I was innocent.

“ Innocent ! replied she eagerly, I dare swear you are perfectly innocent, and I believe he thinks you so ; but if you can give him any striking proofs of your innocence, in order to strengthen his sentiments in your favour, they may be extremely serviceable to you.”

I left her instantly, and went into the garden in search of Mr. Brudenel. I trembled at the sight of him, lest he should be angry with me again, yet I was resolved to make an experiment ; I thought it was better to risque any thing than to see him always displeased with me, and inclined to speak harshly to me.

While

While I went along I gathered a remarkable fine peach, and carrying it to him, I asked him, with the utmost good humour, if I should pare it for him.

He smiled, and taking it from me, said, " I will spare you the trouble, my Lucy, if you can eat a bit."

I sat down by him on a green seat, and we began to eat the peach. He seemed to look upon me, once more, with satisfaction. He appeared so pleased, that I relished what he gave me, and affected indeed to be more delighted than I really was, to make him happy; at length I began to take a little courage; laying my hand upon his shoulder, I said, " I hope you will not be angry with me again, at least not a great while."

" Angry with you, Lucy! replied he; I am never angry with you, my dearest girl."

" Yes,

“ Yes, indeed you *was*, about Giles; but I did not then think that he might possibly have connived at Mr. Bever’s coming into the garden when you was abroad ; his appearance there was entirely without my knowledge, and you may be assured it never should have been with my consent.”

“ Hold, hold ;” answered he, eagerly interrupting me, “ What does all this tend to ? What do you mean ?”

“ I mean nothing but what I say, replied I, and what I have for some time”——

“ Some time !” exclaimed he, staring wildly, “ Have you suffered Bever to see you, by the contrivance of this fellow, for a considerable time ?”

“ No, indeed, my dear Mr. Brudenel ;” answered I, quite frightened at his looks, “ Be but calm, and I will tell you every thing.”

“ Every

“ Every thing !” cried he hastily,
“ Every thing ! Why, what, what
has passed between you ?”

“ Nothing ; nothing, my dear
Mr. Brudenel ; nothing at which
you need be alarmed in any shape ;
but do sit down, and listen to me
patiently.”

With the greatest difficulty I prevailed on him to be attentive to me. He was willing enough indeed to hear me, but he could not hear me with composure ; his countenance changed so often while I related all that passed between Bever and I, at our meetings both at Bristol and in our garden, that I was hardly able to proceed, so much was I terrified at his behaviour. Nothing but the dread of his anger had prevented me from telling him before. At last, I got through my little narrative ; assuring him still more particularly, that Bever, by persisting to follow me, had given me infinite vexation ;
that

that I had appeared not to see his intentions as long as I could, and that I had treated him with all possible contempt.

These assurances, several times repeated, and strengthened by a variety of little circumstances, all tending to convince Mr. Brudenel how much dislike I had discovered to Bever's proceedings, and how sincere an aversion I had to the person, who dared to suppose I would give him any encouragement after I was married to a man so every way agreeable to me, brought him at last into some degree of calmness. He then only appeared to be surprised that I had not told him of the affair before; but when I re-assured him, that I forbore the communication of it merely because I was afraid, that his resentment against Bever's carriage might produce a quarrel between them, and expose *him*, who was so deservedly dear to me,

me, to the fury of a man who had no regard to decency or honour, or even humanity, and who was, therefore, by no means upon a par with him, as he was opposite to him in every respect.

While I was proceeding to give my Brudenel all the praises to which he was justly entitled, he stopped me. “ I believe what you say, Lucy, replied he, looking earnestly in my face, do you really love me ?”

“ Indeed, indeed I do, my dear Mr. Brudenel, said I; were *you* to treat me with ever so much coolness, and were Bever to treat me with all the tenderness which first warmed my heart, I could never think of *him*, never look upon *him* again. You have all my esteem, all my affection; and whether you will pardon me, and believe me to be sincere or not, I can never love any man but *you*.”

My

My sighs and my tears, accompanying my words, at length moved him to lay aside his doubts, to banish his indifference. He pressed me to his bosom, called me his dearest Lucy, his angel, his wife, and made me again and again repeat all the kind things, as he called them, which I had uttered. We now seem to be on better terms than ever. May nothing happen to interrupt our future felicity! nothing shall be said or done, intentionally, on *my* part, to occasion any interruption to it. Did I not so sincerely and tenderly love him as I really do, my gratitude would sufficiently prompt me to study to please him. I am sometimes indeed at a loss to know whether the superiority lies on the side of gratitude or love.

Once more, thanks, my dear Patty, for your most friendly advice; had I but followed *that* advice sooner, how much anxiety had it spared

G me!

me ! Anxiety which would have been, I feared, very prejudicial to me just at this time ; but believe me, my fears were more depressing on Mr. Brudenel's account, than on my own. I should be loth to meet his smiles full of complaints, and incapable of discovering, by my looks, the pleasure which I receive from his affectionate behaviour to me. Besides, if any accident happens to me just now, I shall fancy that he will attribute it to his having spoken harshly to me, or treated me with neglect. His humanity alone will, I know, make him suffer so severely for it, that I shall be more pained by his concern from me, than from any disorder which might be occasioned by a mortifying alteration in his carriage to me. Glad am I, therefore, that I have made him and myself easy with regard to Bever. When Bever finds that we do not regard him, I hope he will give himself no more trouble about us.

L E T-

L E T T E R LXXVI.

Mr. Brudenel to Sir George Milbourne.

I AM at last, and very unexpectedly, become supremely happy. My amiable Lucy has silenced all my fears, both with regard to her health and to her conduct. I had never been easy, I confess, after I found her so solicitous about that rascal Giles, whom, however, I turned away immediately. But though I got rid of a good for nothing servant, I could not get rid of the uneasiness which I felt on my wife's account. I actually believed that both her life and honour were in danger from the revival of Bever's inclination for her, and trembled lest it should have encreased that attachment she had to him; by reflecting on which, though I pitied her more than blamed her for it, I

grew very miserable. I strove to conceal my anxiety as much as possible, but it would appear sometimes, and diffused over my features and behaviour a gloom which, while it discovered my own wretchedness, necessarily rendered me disagreeable to my wife. She was, I plainly perceived, hurt by it, and she honestly confessed that she was afraid of speaking to me. But you shall hear how dexterously the dear girl brought it about.

After having watched my looks for several days, and frequently thrown down her dove-like eyes, when she saw me observe her, as if unwilling to be caught, she followed me, one evening into the garden, and presenting a fine peach to me, asked me if she should pare it for me.

I took it from her, cut it, and offered her a piece, as I imagined that she might have a particular fancy for it. She relished it extremely,
and

and I was charmed to see it so agreeable to her. I hardly till then knew how much I loved her. This trifling incident made me doat on her while I gazed on her, and what followed tended to encrease my affection for her. Laying her hand gently upon my shoulder, she said, with a look and with accents which went to my heart, " I hope you will not be angry with me again."

This was too much to bear; the tears stood in her dear eyes; yet I was afraid of listening too eagerly, of hearing too much, lest my passion for her should get the better of my reason. I only replied, therefore, that I was not angry; but I could not help making a tender addition, to atone, in some measure, for a fault which I was not, however, willing to own. In fact, I began to soften apace.

She answered, " Yes, but you *was* angry about my speaking for Giles :

G 3

I did

I did not recollect then the share he had had in the letting in Bever when you was from home."

How I felt, how I look'd, George ! I started with fury, stung as I was with jealousy. I was eager to hear her proceed, yet I interrupted her to ask her what she meant, and if she had permitted Bever to see her privately.

She told me, that there had been only two interviews between them ; that he had surpris'd her the first time in the Rooms at Bristol, and a second time in my garden.

I scarce gave her time to get out her words ; I was distract'd ; I cannot express what I felt, yet wild to hear what she had further to say, I promised to be calm. The sweet, trembling girl, absolutely frighted I believe at my frantic carriage, proceeded to relate every particular concerning the vile fellow's behaviour. She positively assured me, that

that on Bever's pressing her to listen to him while he apologized for his conduct to her, she urged me to leave Bristol, that she might get rid of him; and *now* I very well remember, she complained that the air of Bristol did not agree with her. I remember too, that I returned hither sooner than I should have done, on purpose to oblige her. Well, he followed her hither I suppose, and bribed my rascal of a gardener to let him into the garden when I was from home; for she tells me that he surprized her one evening in a *temple*, and intreated her so earnestly to pardon him, and to permit him to see her clandestinely (what a villain!) but that she absolutely refused to comply with his request, and insisted upon his leaving her immediately; adding, that he left her soon afterwards.

You may guess how I looked during so interesting a detail, and how many questions I asked. I even

cross-examined her, and watched, with the most scrupulous exactness, every turn of her countenance, to see if I could catch her at a fault; to see if I could discover the least intention in her to impose upon me. You will, I trust, allow that her information was enough to create suspicions, had I been entirely free from them before. There was the strongest appearance of innocence conceivable in her looks, and a very prepossessing air of frankness in her whole carriage, yet it was some time before I could bring myself to give credit to all she had communicated. She however at length convinced me, by the simplicity and consistency of her behaviour, that she had not erred even in thought. I devoured her with my caresses, whispering while I embraced her, "Why did you not make me acquainted with all this before, my Lucy? Why did you conceal it from me so long?"

She

She replied, with an enchanting tenderness in her voice and eyes, that she dreaded to expose me to a quarrel, fearing I would deem it necessary to resent Bever's behaviour, and that she trembled for a life so very precious to her as mine. What a coaxing little girl she is: yet she did not stop here, Milbourne; she said so many handsome things *of* me, and addressed so many tender things *to* me, and accompanied her words with so many sighs and tears, the most powerful of all female arguments, that I yielded to the empassioned transports I felt at such a behaviour; transports equal, if not superior to those which I felt before jealousy disturbed my peace. From that blest hour her carriage has been so exceedingly enchanting, that I want words to describe my happy sensations. I can only add, that I unquestionably am the sole possessor of the tenderest, the most excellent

heart in the universe. I now see things in a new light; and if Heaven support my dearest wife through her approaching trial, my every wish will be compleated.

LETTER LXXVII.

Miss Ellison to Mrs. Catesby.

HAMILTON leaves us to-morrow: he and I have agreed about every point except one. I have declared my entire dislike to the profession of a soldier in the strongest terms. I have given him all those reasons which I formerly transmitted to you against it; and yet, though I am sure he loves me sincerely, he hesitates about selling his horrid commission. Much may be said, undoubtedly, on both sides of the question; for whenever he parts with his commission, he throws himself out of the line of promotion,

tion, and will, in fact, have nothing to depend upon but the trifle he may get in exchange for it ; I ought therefore, in strict justice, to indemnify him for the loss he will sustain ; and I only give him such an indemnification, by promising with my hand to be his. This step cannot, I think, be reckoned imprudent. I am first willing, however, to have Lady Wharton's approbation ; I have therefore written to her, and shall receive, I hope, her answer to night.

Hamilton has spoken to Brudenel about his sister. The former has behaved like a real friend ; he at once offered his interest to Hamilton, which is by no means inconsiderable ; and upon Hamilton's informing him of the particular dislike *I* had to the military profession, advised him to sell out, assuring him that he *could* and *would* procure a civil employment for him equally genteel and profitable. As to the

dear, amiable Lucy, *she* threw her arms about my neck, and thanked me over and over for my regard for her brother. I love *her* for being like *him*, and I love *him* for being like *her*; they are quite *brother* and *sister*. I am happy also to tell you, that Mr. and Mrs. Brudenel are entirely happy in each other, having come to a right understanding about the conduct of Mr. Bever; who will, I hope, be no longer troublesome, when he sees that his impertinent proceedings are attended with no sort of success. How I hate people who delight in mischief! and there are too many people in the world, who take pleasure in disturbing others, though they reap not the slightest advantage from their malicious operations.

In Continuation.

THIS restless man, you know whom I mean, obliged me to break off; he brought me a large packet from Lady Wharton, and insisted upon my reading her letter to him, at least that part of it in which *he* was interested. He has had the satisfaction (may I not say, *we have had?*) to find her Ladyship approve of our designs: she invites us cordially to return to her; but I cannot leave Mrs. Brudenel for any time, till she goes to London for the winter, though she seems to be better in health as well as spirits: however, as her present situation requires particular attention, and as Brudenel has so many fears on her account, I am willing to stay with her as long as I can. Perhaps I may pay her Ladyship a short visit, for her concurrence with our plan, and I shall
pro-

probably take an opportunity to make my acknowledgments to her, when Hamilton goes to town to dispose of one employment, and to prepare for another. He has *my* consent also to inform his own family of our intentions ; for I would not have them think that I have a design to run away with the son and heir. I wish I may be able to love them as I ought ; but you will allow that they must be strange people, scarce ever to write to such a daughter as Mrs. Brudenel. Their neglect is, I find, chiefly owing to the envy of Caroline Hamilton. To what abominable lengths will jealousy and malevolence carry some people !

In Continuation.

HE would not. Hamilton, you may be sure——let me finish my letter. While he staid he pleaded so hard to have the last hour, as he called

called it, to himself, that I knew not how to refuse his request ; I wish I may be able to oppose him in any thing ; and indeed we seem to think so much alike, that I fancy we shall have no thwarting conversations between us. How many times has he gone to the door, and returned ? Fye, Hamilton ! how unlike that cruel animal a soldier ! Yet, though I chide him, and drive him from me, Harriot, I doat on his manly tenderness.

He has left me ; and I now feel somehow as if my soul was separated from my body. Is not that saying too much ? But you do not know the man. I wish I do not dwindle into a downright figher. I had better resolve, in spite of Lucy's beseeching face, to go and while away part of the time at Windsor. I cannot support his absence, live where every shrub, every flower reminds me of the " dear, conscious scenes of former

mer love" with him. Don't laugh at me, Harriot; if you do, I protest I will marry with all possible expedition, come and see you, and bring a pretty fellow of Hamilton's acquaintance with me, who shall put you in a way to give me an opportunity to laugh as heartily in my turn; and so write to me at Lady Wharton's.

L E T T E R LXXVIII.

Captain Hamilton to Mr. Ross.

MARIA and Brudenel have conspired to make me the happiest of men. I cannot stay to write particulars. I have just taken leave of the former, and am going to set off for London. Your letters will find me at my father's. Lucy and her husband are quite satisfied with each other! but my lovely Elifon engrosses my attention; I could
 expa-

expatiate on her beauties and her virtues for hours. She has given me leave to correspond with her. I could write *to* her and *of* her till we meet again. I actually don't know whether I am not capable of saying some very fine things about absence, constancy, &c. &c. but, as I told you before, I have no leisure at present.

L E T T E R LXXIX.

Mr. Bever to Lord Musgrave.

ALL that I have done, hitherto, to sow dissention between Brudenel and his wife, has proved ineffectual. They appear to be upon better terms than ever; tho' I cannot, indeed, come near enough to them, at present, to overhear their conversations, for my old friend Giles has been turned away, merely for having done *me* so many friendly

friendly offices, and I have not yet found out the price of the new man. Besides, I believe I shall take a shorter and more efficacious method. Have her I *must*, at the hazard of my fortune, and even of my life. Now I know some of your d——d squeamish, moral dogs may start at this declaration, but you and I have a more liberal way of thinking; not that I would risque a hundred pieces for any other woman, let me perish. The truth is, I really love this girl, love her more ardently than I yet loved any creature breathing. So well, indeed, do I love her, that I will venture to affirm, I should certainly have married her, when I found I could not get her upon my own terms, had she not given me the slip. This assertion may seem unaccountable to *you*, who are acquainted with my strong antipathy to marriage; but you are not acquainted with the beauty of
 Lucy's

Lucy's person, with the gentleness of her temper. And then she loved me extremely, till her delicacy was wounded by the attack I made upon her. She, therefore, must necessarily be ever dear to me. And can you suppose that her passion for me will not revive, when I have brought her to listen to reason, with regard to my present proceedings? I grant, that her unfashionable principles, in consequence of her strict education, added to her natural modesty, will occasion considerable resistance to my arguments. But when she is used ill by her husband, who, like the rest of *us*, thinks, I suppose, he has done her a favour by marrying her, she may be glad to find an asylum in the arms of the man who loves her. Nothing makes a woman so eager to fly to her lover, as the ill usage of her husband. It must be *my* business, therefore, to drive him to such usage, and I'll
 answer

answer for it, she will be mine. I am sensible that I shall have a cursed deal of trouble with her, and I may possibly feel a few qualms of conscience, at the means I shall be obliged to make use of for the accomplishment of my point; but the possession of such a lovely creature, and the transports which I shall feel on finding her tenderness returning for *me*, who was her first lover, will amply reward me for all my pains. Women, you must know, Musgrave, are mighty fond of a *first love*. And so I will proceed to accelerate the execution of my scheme.

LETTER LXXX.

Mr. Brudenel to Sir George Milbourne.

SUCH an event has happened! it has almost deprived me of my reason; and were I not fully sensible
of

of the pangs I endure, I should be sometimes inclined to doubt my existence, into such a chaos of misery have I been plunged. If I can recollect my scattered thoughts a little, I will tell you, with as much conciseness as possible, what has made me such a wretch; but I scarce know where to begin, so much is my mind disturbed.

You remember, perhaps, that in my last letter, in my very last letter, I told you how compleatly happy I was in being assured of my wife's affection. Heaven and earth, what a change a few days has made in me! and all from—— Oh G—d! You advised me, if you recollect, Milbourne, you advised me against this ill-fated marriage. Had I but taken your advice! But there is a fatality in some things. Yet this poor, deluded, undone creature could not help it. She could have helped deceiving me, however. She might
have

have prevented me, by telling me the truth, from marrying a w——e. H——ns! to think that a w——e is my wife! My blood congeals at the bare idea; I am stiffened with horror. But you will not understand all this, unless I come to an explanation. Know then, that I, this morning, received a letter, a very extraordinary letter, (of which the enclosed is a copy) and answered it as every man, who has the least spirit, *would have* answered it. The coward, the rascally coward, will not fight; he tells me, as if he was determined to make me raving mad, he tells me, but you will see what he has written; I cannot repeat it; I am on the rack; and yet, tho' I could curse the cause of this mischief, when I reflect upon the happiness I enjoyed while Lucy induced me to believe that she loved me, and when I now behold her dejected, pining, and apparently very wretched, I cannot

not check my compassion ; I pity her, though I have received such injurious treatment from her. Oh ! when I think of past joys, joys which I so lately believed not only real but permanent, I wonder that my brain has not been turned. However, I must tell you, Milbourne, that I carried the first of the enclosed letters (as soon as I recovered a little from my horror and astonishment) to Mrs. Brudeneel, and asked her if Bever had asserted a fact, and if it had been possible for her to deceive me so grossly, to impose upon me in so cruel a manner. She changed colour, she looked extremely agitated, yet immediately declared her innocence in the strongest terms. When I shook my head, and seemed to question her veracity, she persisted in affirming that Bever's letter was full of falsehoods ; and that he had written it in a fit of revenge, because she had refused

refused to renew her acquaintance with him.

Her defence was plausible; but was I to sit down tamely, and suffer any man to call my wife a w——e whenever he pleases; besides, how could I be sure that his accusations were false? You may be assured that she will never plead guilty to the heavy charge laid against her; and yet she denied it with a modest confidence, which would have almost convinced any man of her innocence; but an injured husband is not, ought not to be, so easily convinced. When such a woman, indeed, avers solemnly, that she is blameless, and accompanies her asseverations with the most affecting sighs and tears, one cannot treat her ill, though one cannot look upon her in the light in which she appeared before.

What a melancholy, what a cutting reflection! how suddenly are all my pleasures destroyed! To proceed:

ceed : I left her in the deepest sorrow ; apparently so ; I could not stay to tell her ; my ideas were all in confusion : when I grew a little calm, I wrote an answer to this distracting letter ; my answer produced a reply still more excruciating. You have them all inclosed, read them, return them, and send me your sentiments about them. I am not capable at present of writing any more upon this subject. My mind is in too distressed a state.

LETTER LXXXI.

Mr. Bever to Mr. Brudenel.

[Inclosed in the foregoing.]

S I R,

THOUGH I have all imaginable reason to hate *you*, for having deprived me of my mistress, yet
H my

my anger is at present fiercer against *her*, as I think *she* merits it most by having deceived us both. It is an indisputable truth that she has injured you, by imposing herself upon you for a woman of virtue, when she had not the slightest pretensions to it. On a more lovely object, indeed, I will allow, few men can fix their eyes; and her manners are not less enchanting than her person: but a more artful little devil never existed. I was half-distracted at the loss of her, yet I could not help admiring the pretty gypsy's contrivance to make you believe she was a vestal. A deception was never conducted with greater address. However, though she has so far succeeded, though she has carried her point by getting herself married to a man of *your* fortune and consequence, and though I doat on the charming hussy for her management, yet I do not think it is fair that you should
be

be fooled to the end of the chapter; and though you had not sagacity enough to find her out, there is no reason why you should not be informed by some friend of the true state of the case. I am therefore willing to appear in that character; I offer myself to be that friend, and do honestly assure you, that I enjoyed all the privileges of a husband for nothing, for which you have paid so dear.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient humble servant,
W. BEVER.

L E T T E R LXXXII.

Mr. Brudenel to Mr. Bever.

[Inclosed with the foregoing one in letter LXXX.]

AFTER having received from you so insolent a letter, Sir, I can only reply to it, though I am
H 2 very

very averſe to the barbarous a cuſtom of duelling, both as a man of honour and of humanity, by telling you, that in anſwer to ſuch unprovoked treatment, I expect you to give me ſatisfaction with your ſword, for the impudent falſhoods which you have dared to vent againſt a woman, whom you had before ſufficiently injured. I ſhall be alone upon the Common at the end of the Park at break of day. .

J. BRUDENEL.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Mr. Bever to Mr. Brudenel.

[Incloſed with the foregoing ones in letter LXXX.]

S I R,

AS I have to the full as particular an averſion to duelling as you can poſſibly have, you may

be assured that I shall never draw my sword in the cause of a woman whom I can prove to be a w——. I will not defile my paper with the word at length : she is, I must allow, possessed of every qualification proper for a wife, chastity excepted. She is the most delicate, and, consequently the most desirable of women ; and I am sufficiently mortified by having lost her, for she was the most enchanting mistress, tho' she may, for ought I know, be the devil of a wife ; it is therefore not worth our while, in my humble opinion, to quarrel about her. Besides, attack me which way you will, as I can back my assertions with indisputable proofs, you will gain no redress for the grievance by which you are so much galled. If you will give yourself ever so little a time for reflection, you must be sensible that you will, by fighting for Lucy Ha-

milton, make yourself inexpressibly more ridiculous than you have already done by marrying her.

W. BEVER.

L E T T E R LXXXIV.

Mrs. Brudenel to Miss Sommers.

I HAVE received such a blow, my Patty, that I think it will put an end to my sorrows, by putting an end to my life; for existence can be no longer desirable. Mr. Brudenel, my dear Mr. Brudenel no longer looks upon me with the affection which so very lately made me compleatly happy. The villain Bever, Heaven forgive me for calling him so! has ruined my peace for ever: he has wrote two letters to Mr. Brudenel, wherein he accuses me of having been his mistress in the worst sense of the word; he even declares that he can prove his assertions.

tions. I hope Mr. Brudenel does not give credit to all the contents of those vile, injurious letters, but they have certainly staggered him a good deal, and occasioned a change in his behaviour to me. Yet though Mr. Brudenel's altered carriage to me cuts me to the heart, I cannot tell how to blame him ; he imagines that I have deceived him, and I cannot clear my innocence but by assuring him, that Bever has advanced absolute falsehoods against me. I have no witness to prove that he was not in my chamber at the Inn, on the unfortunate night when I trusted myself alone to his honour. He has taken advantage of his treacherous admission into my chamber on that night, to make me appear infamous in Mr. Brudenel's eyes. Mr. Brudenel's peace too is destroyed ; I cannot find fault with him, but I most earnestly wish that I had it in my power to convince him of my inno-

cence ; it cannot be. I therefore as earnestly wish to be released from a world in which there is no more felicity for me. When I am removed from him, Mr. Brudenel may chuse a wife who has, by her prudence and discretion, given no creature breathing an opportunity to accuse her of the crimes of which he believes me guilty, though I shudder at the bare idea of them. I was not worthy of so amiable, so excellent a husband ; I should have been but too happy to have preserved his affection ; I cannot therefore make such heavy complaints as a woman justly might, who had not acted as I have done.

My spirits are so much sunk that I wonder I have been able to write this. My eyes grow dim, and I feel myself very ill. I have no body to open my heart to, but you my dearest friend. You, my Patty, will,
I doubt

I doubt not, believe me, when I say that I never designedly erred; and that I would sooner have perished than have been the creature Bever wishes to have me thought. My affliction is doubled, because Mr. Brudenel has sent this bad man a challenge. He reproached me for having occasioned such a proceeding. "Bever, said he, has declared that you are too abandoned to be worth fighting for." He even shewed me the letter, in answer to his, which did indeed contain such a meaning. Yet let me not think of myself, let me rather thank Heaven for preserving Mr. Brudenel from the commission of such an action; for though fighting in some cases may be defended, fighting with Bever upon this occasion can never be justified. But I must lay down my pen. If I grow better, I will write again to my dear friend, my best Patty; if I do not, forgive my faults; do not

forget them however, rather reflect upon them as *warnings*.

My brother is luckily in London. I love him dearly, and should be glad of *one* real friend near me at so trying a juncture, but his presence here might produce words between him and Mr. Brudenel, which would give me still more uneasiness than I now feel. Mr. Brudenel has been a kind brother to him; he has gained a very considerable employment for him, in order to make him suitable, in point of fortune, to Miss Ellison. Maria is at Windsor; so much the better, for she is of so affectionate a disposition, that she would certainly *feel* for

Your unhappy friend,

LUCY BRUDENEL.

L E T-

L E T T E R LXXXV.

Sir George Milbourne to Mr. Brudenel.

I AM exceedingly concerned, my dear Brudenel, to hear of the treatment you have met with from Bever; more especially on Mrs. Brudenel's account, who must, I know, be extremely hurt by what has passed. I will allow that you have had a considerable provocation; yet you may plainly see, my dear friend, upon a little reflection, that Bever's accusation is only a scheme to make a breach between you, of which he hopes to take advantage. No wonder then that he declined fighting; such a man cannot have the smallest idea of acting with honour; with such a man, therefore, honourable measures cannot be pursued. There is indeed, in my opinion, but one way for you to shew your resentment.

ment. His own conduct points it out. You have nothing to do but to discover the utmost contempt. Contempt will certainly overthrow all his infernal designs against your domestic happiness. For my own part, I confess that I do not believe a single syllable of his assertions against Mrs. Brudenel. But supposing they were true, and that a desire of settling herself honourably with you, had induced her to gloss over in the best manner she could her past failings; as she conducts herself with modesty and discretion, and behaves to you with delicacy and tenderness, had not you better seem to overlook what is past? By so doing you will stimulate her, if she has the slightest degree either of love or generosity, to endeavour to deserve your affection. Try, therefore, my dear Brudenel, to take no farther notice of this worthless fellow; he is not deserving of the least attention.

tion. You have sufficiently convinced him, that you do not want courage to resent an affront in a proper manner ; let the affair rest here, and do all in your power to comfort poor Mrs. Brudenel, whose distress upon this occasion is to me the strongest proof of her innocence. I even think I can say, on my life she is virtuous. Cherish her then as a virtuous wife, and let me hear immediately if our sentiments coincide.

L E T T E R LXXXVI.

Mr. Brudenel to Sir George Milbourne.

I AM distracted : my wife, my Lucy is dangerously ill ; dying perhaps. Oh ! G—d ! I am dreadfully apprehensive that I—how can I mention it—there's misery inexpressible in the thought—that I, I George have murdered her—

In

In Continuation.

I WAS called away to the doctor : he tells me, that she may possibly, with great care, be recovered. No care, no attention shall be wanting : my fortune, my life would I freely give to save her. The horrid letters written by that villain have brought her into this dangerous situation. I was too much disturbed to know how to act with propriety. Let me own my imprudence to you ; I have no way of making the least atonement for it, but by an honest avowal of it. Yes, George, I have been indiscreetly precipitate : I shewed Bever's letters to my wife in too great a hurry ; they deeply affected her ; her spirits could not sustain so severe a shock : she miscarried, and has been alarmingly ill ever since. Before your letter arrived, I had exerted all my tenderness and solicitude
to

to relieve her. Pity and love pleaded so powerfully in her favour, that I, in my own mind acquitted her, and presently after discovered the sincerest remorse for having only a single moment suspected her, at the instigation of that consummate villain. But it was too late, the mischief was done. Yet the suffering angel never complained of the pangs she felt; she only begged me to believe her innocent; to believe that she never deceived me, and to pardon her for all the troubles she had occasioned me. I assured her, that I believed her to be every thing I wished, and that I had a thousand times more reason to ask *her* pardon than she had to implore *my* forgiveness, as I ought not to have listened to such scurrilous falsehoods, and was still more culpable for giving credit to them. I accompanied these assurances with numberless endearments, which were happily so far efficacious as to compose

pose her mind a little, but her disorder had grown too strong before I recovered myself enough to behave in a rational manner. However, while there is life there is hope. I am willing to think that the provocation which I received required the resentment which I discovered, but I can never excuse myself for my precipitation. If I should lose my Lucy! (Madness is in the thought.) That nothing may be omitted to make her as easy as she *can* be in her truly melancholy condition, I have sent for Miss Sommers, a particular friend of her's, to be with her. She is a sensible, good girl. I have written both to Hamilton and Miss Ellison; the former is attending his father, who was seized a few days ago with a violent fever. This information must be carefully kept from my wife at present, for though her father neglected her most unkindly, when she most needed his assistance,

assistance, and may not perhaps be affected with her situation, yet her heart is so tender that she could not, I am sure, hear of *his* situation without being severely pained by it. Poor creature! she has indeed met with cruel treatment. May Heaven restore her to my prayers! If she lives, I will make her large amends for the misery which I have brought upon her.

LETTER LXXXVII.

Mr. Bever to Lord Musgrave.

SOME malevolent dæmon presides, I think, over my designs, and frustrates my schemes as soon as they are planned. I acquainted you with the success my letter met with; but it will not, I fear, be attended with the consequences I had promised myself: the simple girl, having taken her husband's suspicions
to

to heart, fell sick upon it. In this way do all your gentle creatures behave; a man does not know how to deal with them. This sickness of Lucy's touched Brudenel so much, that he has made it all up with her, and believes her to be the very angel I know she is. However, she shan't escape me so; but I must let her get a little better first, or the poor, timid, pretty simpleton will slip through my fingers, and death will totally disappoint me before I can get another interview with her. These reflections come across me at an unlucky time. I begin to feel some how cursedly queer about this affair; and yet, were I to relinquish it, as I have proceeded so far, I shall be rarely laughed at. No, no; that must not be. Conscience, remorse, I give to the winds: I cannot bear to be baffled.

L E T-

L E T T E R LXXXVIII.

Captain Hamilton to Miss Ellison.

HOW exceedingly painful is
 absence from the society of
 those whom we love ! Since I have
 been distanced from my dear Maria,
 how often have I made this exclama-
 tion ? I am the more sensible of it
 at this time, as I am full of anxiety
 on my poor Lucy's account, and as
 I spend many melancholy hours by
 the bedside of a sick father, and the
 dread of any change in your health,
 or in your sentiments concerning me,
 at a time when I am prevented from
 doing any thing to improve those
 sentiments in my favour, greatly en-
 creases my unhappiness : When my
 friends around me seem to be hasten-
 ing to their dissolution, do I shew
 the weakness of my mind by trem-
 bling for my dearest Maria ? Should
 I be

I be deserving of her heart, were I indifferent about so valuable a blessing? and can she chide me for being afraid lest a more worthy object should deprive me of her tenderness. I feel, from my soul, both for Brudenel and Lucy. He was, I think, too hasty in his behaviour to her; and should her illness prove fatal, it may be too much for him, for I know he is doatingly fond of her, and of a generous disposition. How is it to be lamented, that excessive sensibility subjects us to the worst as well as to the best of passions; but I will hope that my sister may get over her disorder. You will, my amiable Maria, I am thoroughly assured, be uncommonly kind to her at this time, as she now stands in need of your most affectionate regard. It will be proper, I fancy, to keep my father's situation a secret from her, while she is in so uncertain a state; the slightest emotions may be attended

tended with dangerous consequences; though I confess, indeed, that I have very small hopes of his recovery, as his fever was considerably heightened before I knew he was out of order, by the intelligence he received from Caroline; for she told him of this bustle about Lucy, which she had heard from Miss Sommers, who represented it in a manner the most favourable to Mrs. Brudenel; but I fear that Caroline related it in a very different manner to my father. 'Tis surely very strange that envy should carry a sister such unpardonable lengths. By aspersing Lucy, Caroline certainly hurts herself, though she is too much blinded by envy to see the folly of her conduct, not to say the vileness of it; for where is the man who will venture upon a woman with so malicious a turn of mind? But is this subject to be enlarged upon in an epistle to Miss Ellison? Forgive me, my Maria, the imprudence and distress of those so
nearly

nearly connected with me give me great disturbance, in spite of my endeavours to moderate the sensations occasioned by them. Yet when I reflect upon the excellence of your character, I flatter myself that you rather esteem than despise the man, who is capable of feeling for the faults and misfortunes of others; and that whatever happens to me and mine, you will permit me still to subscribe myself

Your faithfully devoted

W. HAMILTON.

L E T T E R LXXXIX.

Miss Ellison to Captain Hamilton.

Lime Park.

I HAVE a great mind to chide you exceedingly; but I check myself, by considering that you have met with events lately sufficiently perplexing to render you rather an object of pity than anger: besides,
every

every thing must give way to the pleasure I feel in being able to tell you, that our Lucy is, by the doctors, pronounced to be out of danger. I do not, however, pin my faith entirely upon their opinions; I can see by her eyes, and by her returning vivacity, that she is considerably better. Brudenel is almost out of his wits for joy; and Miss Sommers, who is truly an amiable woman, discovers the sincerest satisfaction. In short, we are all of us in high spirits, and hardly remember that there is such a villain as Bever in the world. So much for my good news: as for your's, I sincerely sympathize with you in your concern for your father's illness; with regard to Miss Hamilton, I will not enter upon that subject at present; indeed I have not leisure to write a great deal: I have, therefore, the more reason to wish you were here. I certainly do most earnestly

nestly desire to see you. In the mean time, be assured that I am unalterably

Your's,

M. ELLISON.

L E T T E R X C .

Miss Ellison to Lady Wharton.

WHAT a scene of distress have I have beheld, my dear madam! It has affected me greatly. How shall I be able to relate it in a manner the least shocking to your Ladyship! Poor, dear Mrs. Brudenel! We had all the most flattering hopes of her recovery. Soon after I had communicated the agreeable news to Capt. Hamilton, I saw, passing through the hall to return to Lucy's apartment, Mr. Brudenel in the parlour, talking to a young person who, by her dress, appeared to be a servant, but I supposed her to be

be one of the tenants daughters, a woman of no consequence however; when I went into Mrs. Brudenel's chamber, Miss Sommers called to me and said, " We are in the dressing-room, Miss Ellison." I ran thither, quite pleased to find that Mrs. Brudenel had been able to walk so far. She stood at the window, leaning upon Miss Sommers, and, smiling, told me, that her dear Brudenel had been so kind as to lead her to it. " Yes, added Miss Sommers, and she is so delighted with his kindness, that she will not return to her own room till he comes up again to assist her."

" He went down stairs, said Mrs. Brudenel, on being informed that somebody wanted to speak to him, but told me that he should not stay long; I will therefore sit down 'till he comes: this room is cooler and pleasanter than my chamber."

I

I agreed

I agreed with her, and we all three sat talking with more cheerfulness than we had done since she had been sick. Lucy had some carnations and sprigs of myrtle in her hand, which her dear Brudenel, she said, had kindly gathered for her, as he knew she was fond of flowers. In short, all her little prate was about his good sense and his affectionate attentions.

After having waited for him a considerable time, Miss Sommers would have had her return to her chamber, telling her that she had been long enough out of her room for the first time.

“ No, replied she, I will wait a little longer.”

Just at that moment Mr. Brudenel came in, with slow steps, with his arms across, and with his eyes fixed upon the floor.

Mrs. Brudenel, who saw immediately that something had happened
to

to discompose him, said, " I would not attempt, my dear, to go back to my room till you returned, because you promised to lend me your arm."

He made no answer, but threw himself into a chair opposite to that in which she was seated ; fetched a deep sigh, and resting his head upon his hand, continued to look steadily at her.

" My love, cried she, anxiously, what is the matter ? are you not well ? have you met with any thing to make you uneasy ?"

" Met with any thing, ?" replied he, still looking at her.

" Come, added she, rising, as if unwilling to ask any more questions before us, will you help me, Miss Ellison ?"

Yes, answered I, giving her my arm, and so will Mr. Brudenel ; thinking to rouse him by mentioning his name in that manner, but he coolly and flatly replied, No, and

kept his seat ; nor did he once stir from it, though he saw, by the difficulty with which Mrs. Brudenel walked, how weak she was.

“ You have staid too long, my dear Mrs. Brudenel,” said Miss Sommers.

“ I believe I have,” replied she faintingly, and sunk down in a swoon.

We were exceedingly frightened, and as much surpris'd at Mr. Brudenel's making not the least effort to assist her : he sat, shaking his foot, quite unconcerned.

With the help of Morrice, her woman, and the nurse, she was laid upon her bed, and soon afterwards came to herself. Her first words were, while she looked about her, “ Where is Mr. Brudenel ? ”

Mr. Brudenel having followed us slowly, was, by this time, at her bedside.

“ She

“ She deserves all this, and more, said he, yet I cannot, I fear, added he with a deep sigh, I cannot see her die.”

She heard these words but too plainly. Lifting up her languid eyes, she cried, “ Then I am lost for ever, I see.”

Imagining that Mr. Brudenel had got some jealous whim in his head, I endeavoured to call him away from her, in hopes of reasoning him out of it, but he sat down in a chair by her bedside, and would not stir.

Miss Sommers and I, then thinking that it would be better to leave them together, as Mrs. Brudenel was a little recovered, retired.

We waited in the dressing-room near an hour by ourselves ; and as we had heard neither of them speak, we were in hopes that Mrs. Brudenel might be asleep.

At last Mr. Brudenel came to us, but said nothing ; he looked rather
I 3
stupid,

stupid, as if quite oppressed with something which he wished to communicate, and which he knew not how to disclose.

How is Mrs. Brudenel? said we both.

“Bad, very bad, replied he, how can she be otherwise?”

We left him immediately; we found her pale and lifeless, and we screamed for help. Her senses returned, but the nurse told us, that she was afraid her poor lady would never get over it.

I hurried down to Mr. Brudenel, and having sent John for the doctor, hinted Mrs. Brudenel's danger; telling him at the same time, that I believed his continued attentions, by quieting her apprehensions, and giving ease to her mind, could alone restore her.

“What does she apprehend?” replied he, What, indeed, has she not to apprehend? Oh! Miss Ellison,
son,

son, you are not aware of the hypocrisy and infamy which lurk under those beauteous features."

"Do not think so, answered I, you well know that she has been cruelly and falsely aspersed."

"Not falsely, Maria, said he, not falsely; had she been as honest as she would have made me believe her to be, all would have been well; but she has been Bever's w——e." Speaking those words so loudly that I was afraid she would hear them, and be still more shocked.

"Hush, dear Mr. Brudenel, cried I, you rave; what new fancy is this?"

"Nothing new, nothing new, replied he, 'tis only the old story new told."

I really thought he was mad; and again begging him not to speak so loud, ran and shut the door. I then intreated him to inform me, why he talked in that manner.

After having repeated my requests several times, I prevailed on him to disclose what he had heard to make him again so cruel to his Lucy. With much difficulty, with a great deal of hesitation, he gave me the the following intelligence : “ The chamber-maid belonging to the inn, at which Mrs. Brudenel lay the night Bever made an attempt to seduce her, has been to ask to speak with her. Happening to fall in her way, by accident, I found that she only wanted to get more money out of my wife for keeping her secret. The girl is ready to declare upon oath, that Lucy slept that night with Bever, quietly, but that upon their quarrelling in the morning, she had left him, after having given *her* a trifle to be silent, and promised her a handsome sum whenever she was married. Thus you see, continued he, foaming with rage, there is no doubt of my wife’s infamy ! Providence

dence decreed that she should not always have it in her power to impose upon me."

" Oh, Mr. Brudenel, said I, hold, do not mention Providence upon such an occasion : here is some malicious design in all this, I'll lay my life. Let me persuade you to suspend your belief, 'till we have taken measures to come at the truth of this affair."

" Ay, till you all connive together to make a fool of me."——I must break off.

In Continuation.

I LEFT him not at all quieted, though I said every thing I could think of to make him so, and went to Mrs. Brudenel's chamber. I found her in bed, and scarce able to speak ; she held out her hand when I came near, I pressed it, and begged her to try to rest.

She shook her head ; but as I would not return any answer to the few words she spoke at that time, she endeavoured to compose herself.

While she was endeavouring to compose herself, they told me, that the doctors had, from some sudden turn in her disorder, declared her to be in imminent danger, but that they had not ventured to acquaint Mr. Brudenel with so melancholy a decision, as he appeared to be more like a mad-man than a rational being ; the communication, therefore, of this very disagreeable intelligence was left either to me or Miss Sommers ; who was, indeed, so overwhelmed with grief, that I could not, without being guilty of a piece of cruelty, request her to make it known to him. Poor Mrs. Brudenel herself, however, saved me from the execution of so painful a task. After having lain still about half an hour, she put by the curtain.

“ Patty,

“ Patty, said she, I am sure I shall not live long ; nor do I desire to live, for Mr. Brudenel has no longer a good opinion of me, and without his good opinion, life will be only a burthen : yet I should be glad if he could be prevailed on to part with me in some charity, and to give me leave to send for my mother ; her forgiveness would make my last moments more easy to me. Do, my dear Patty, continued she ; do, Miss Ellison ; do, my worthy friends, intercede for me.”

“ I will fetch him to you, replied I eagerly, I am sure he can refuse you nothing.”

I went down stairs ; he was walking backwards and forwards in great agitation. I told him that Mrs. Brudenel wished to speak with him, and that I did not know how long she might be able to articulate.

He started : “ Is she worse,” said he.

“ I think so,” replied I, “ but come, and judge for yourself.”

He followed me hastily. As soon as he sat down by her bedside, she laid her hand on his ; “ May I be suffered still to call you my dear Mr. Brudenel ? Yes, you are, you will be most dear to me during the short time I have to stay in this world of wickedness.”

He gazed earnestly on her ; he sighed. “ Don’t talk so, Lucy, said he, you are light-headed ; and yet your hands are very cold.”

“ They will be colder ere long,” replied she.

“ Heaven forbid ! cried he, I shudder at the thought.”

“ Don’t be alarmed, or uneasy. My death will pain you at the moment, I believe, but should I live you can never be happy with me ; you will always suspect me ; though, as I hope for mercy at the throne of that Almighty Being who saved me
in

in the hour of danger, I solemnly declare that I never even attempted to deceive you; and that I am entirely innocent with regard to the crime of which I have been falsely accused. I deserve, however, to be punished, for having left my father's house to follow a man, who has at last undone me, by robbing me of your good opinion. I am, therefore, contented with my fate, Mr. Brudenel; I am ready to die. When you have got over the little shock occasioned by my departure, you will be happy, at least I hope you will. I pray for your happiness. I have but two favours to solicit. Continue your friendship to my brother, who ought not to suffer for my faults, and let my mother be sent for. I wish very much to implore her pardon and blessing before I die."

Here she was silent, but repeatedly

edly pressed his hand to her cold lips.

Suddenly throwing his arms round her neck, he cried, in words hardly intelligible, Oh Lucy! Lucy! you tear my heart-strings. I cannot part with you : I feel I cannot ; it is impossible. Maria, Miss Sommers, send away for more advice ; send for her mother ; send for her brother ; send for the whole world to save her. Oh God ! what distress can equal mine !

With those words he rose, and wept like an infant ; while she begged him to be comforted, assuring him that she felt very little pain, and that weakness was her chief complaint.

Thank God ! thank God ! cried he, clasping his hands together ; you may then recover, my angel.

She shook her head.

Nay now, added he, she will not give me a single ray of hope.

She

She will not live. I do not deserve to have her restored; and yet, Lucy, though my mind has been distracted by doubts and suspicions, I do now believe that you have been ever just and faithful to me."

"Then I am satisfied, my dear Mr. Brudenel," replied she, with a languid smile.

Imagining that this conversation only affected them too much, I said to Lucy, "a little rest will, I fancy, be of service to you, my amiable friend; I will go immediately and send an express to Mr. Hamilton."

"Thank'e, my good Miss Elifon, said the poor dying creature, but let him make haste."

She then tried to compose herself again; but Brudenel would not quit her bed-side till she fell into a slumber. I then persuaded him to go down with me. He soon afterwards confessed, that not thinking Mrs. Brudenel had been so ill, he
had

had taxed her with bribing the maid at the inn to conceal what had passed between her and Bever.

“ How could you believe so improbable a story ?” replied I.

“ I knew not what to believe. I have been racked and tortured with my suspicions. I have almost lost my reason. I have killed my wife.”

A fresh flood of tears hindered him from proceeding. We sat silently together till Morrice came to the door, and beckoned me. My heart was in a flutter. I apprehended something dreadful. I ran up stairs ; I found Miss Sommers on her knees, by Mrs. Brudenel's bed-side, weeping bitterly.

Mrs. Brudenel made a sign to quicken my approach. “ Forgive this trouble, my dear Miss Ellison, it is the last I shall give you ; pray let me see Mr. Brudenel immediately : I shall not live 'till my mother and brother arrive. My
Patty,

Patty, my good, kind Patty, will tell my parents that, in my last moments, I implored their pardon, and heartily forgive my sister, praying she may never feel what I have felt. Tell my dear brother, Miss Ellison, how much I love him ; be very kind to him, my dear friend. He will, I hope, merit all your favours."

I stood trembling all this while ; not knowing whether it was proper to call Mr. Brudenel or not.

" Where is my love, my husband ?" continued she.

At that moment he entered, flew to her, caught her to his bosom, started, and almost let her drop. " Oh Heaven ! cried he, she is cold ; my life, my angel, is cold as clay ! Fly, fly to the doctor."

" 'Tis too late, my dearest, cried she ; but I thank you for your tender concern, and die, as I have lived, your sincere and faithful wife. I have

have only one request to make, my Brudenel, be a friend to her (pointing to Miss Sommers) who has ever been a friend to me. May Heaven bless you, and may you always enjoy that happiness!" —

Here her voice failed her for a few moments, and she seemed ready to faint, but just recovered herself enough to say, "Farewel, my dearest love; do, pray leave me; I distress you too much; I would not have you see me die."

"No, my love, my angel, I could not bear it." Then, turning to us, he added, "She faints! Oh bring some cordial."

Poor Patty, trembling, advanced with the drops, but shrieked. Mrs. Brudenel, at that instant, sunk from her husband's arms and expired. Turning fiercely to Miss Sommers, he exclaimed, "Who shrieks? you will disturb her, she is not dead; she shall not die. Oh Lucy, Lucy, speak

“speak to me ; speak *one* word of comfort, though I have not deserved it from you.”

Finding that she returned no answer, and that we pressed him to retire, he broke furiously from me, who had taken him by the arm to force him away, “ Unhand me ; I will not leave her. If she is dead, I will stay and die with her.” Throwing himself upon the bed, he then caught her in his arms, and poured out such moving lamentations that they pierced my heart with anguish. Not knowing how to act, I dispatched an express to Sir George Milbourne, who is his particular friend, and acquainted with every thing which has been transacted between him and this poor, dear, amiable, but unfortunate young creature.

I must now prepare to receive Mrs. Hamilton, whom I dread to see ; and to write to the Captain
upon

upon this melancholy subject. I fear I shall not be able to write to him about it. He had a very high regard for his sister, and a just sense of her merit. Besides, in my last letter, I said enough to make him believe that she was in a fair way of recovery. Can I then, my dear Lady Wharton, strike such a blow to the heart of the man I love? Impossible!

L E T T E R XCI.

Mr. Bever to Lord Musgrave.

MY hellish designs have all miscarried: the dear, tender-hearted girl has fallen a victim to her sensibility. She is dead, Musgrave; Lucy Brudenel is dead—killed by *me*.

Finding that she and her husband were on the point of a reconciliation, for I had a spy in the family, I sent Polly Curtis (whom I hired to per-

personate the chamber-maid belonging to the inn, at which I made an attempt upon Lucy's virtue) to tell Brudenel that I had succeeded; but I cannot stay to write particulars. 'Tis a cursed business. I could not have believed that her death would have moved me so much. I really loved her: and was such a behaviour a proof of my love? Oh! Musgrave, by that foolish, by that unsuccessful attempt I lost the truest, the tenderest, the loveliest of girls. I abhor myself, and every thing about me; life is become a burthen. After all, what a confounded deal of trouble do we take for pleasure, which pleasure is commonly frustrated by the very efforts we make to enjoy it! Could I have brought myself to marry her, she might have been alive, and we might have been happy. But my own ridiculous behaviour has disappointed me, and I must pay for it.

L E T-

L E T T E R X C I I .

Sir Geo. Milbourne to E. Milbourne, Esq.

Lime Park.

I HASTENED hither with all possible expedition, yet within three miles of the Park I met one of Mr. Brudenel's servants, who was riding post to me with the inclosed. When I had opened it, and read it, I said, "Your master is very much afflicted, I see." "He is almost distracted, Sir, replied the fellow; and Miss Ellison begs you would make no delay."

As soon as I arrived, Miss Ellison, who discovered the greatest friendship and affection for the late unfortunate Mrs. Brudenel, met me at the door, and told me that Mr. Brudenel would, she feared, be deprived of his reason, so severe had his shock been; and that she had sent

sent for me, hoping he would be inclined to listen to an old friend.

I went into his library directly, and found him, to all appearance, with his mind greatly discomposed: there was the greatest disorder also in his person. His waistcoat was quite unbuttoned as well as the collar of his shirt, and his hair hung over his eyes, which seemed to be swelled with tears. He was writing at a table, but his hand was so tremulous that he could scarce hold his pen.

He started at the sight of me, and hastily thrust his paper into his drawer; then advancing towards me, he held up his hands and cried, "She is gone, George; Lucy is dead."

The last word was pronounced in a tone so expressive of the keenest anguish that I trembled for him. I actually could not answer him.

"See,

“ See, see, continued he, how I have affected my friend! If he is so touched at her death, what must I be? I, who murdered her!—Oh God!”

Falling upon my neck, when he had uttered the last exclamation, he wept aloud.

I was in hopes that his tears would contribute to his relief, and help to bring him to himself. He has wept a great deal since, but I think he does not receive any benefit from his tears. He spends his whole time in vindicating his wife's conduct, in loading himself with reproaches, and in cursing Bever. I cannot leave him long enough to write the particulars of this unfortunate affair, which Miss Ellison has communicated to me, who is gone to Windsor. Poor Mrs. Hamilton, the mother of Mrs. Brudenel, came too late to see her daughter alive, but wept bitterly over her, and condemned

demned herself cruelly, for having refused to receive her after her elopement; adding, however, that she was not her own mistress.

I don't find that any thing I have hitherto said to our distressed friend, has administered much consolation to him, but I hope that time will restore him to the full possession of his intellects, which are at present greatly unhinged. You will hardly, I imagine, be able to read the inclosed short letter; you will plainly perceive by the perusal of it, that the mind of the writer was in a distracted state when he dispatched it.

K

LET-

L E T T E R XCIII.

Mr. Brudenel to Sir George Milbourne.

[Inclosed in the foregoing.]

MY wife is dead, stone dead ;
and by my hand. I have
but one thing to do, and then I
shall follow her. If we never meet
again, farewell George : be warned
by me not to be too credulous.

L E T T E R XCIV.

Sir Geo. Milbourne to E. Milbourne, Esq.

NOT all my vigilance, not all
our care, could prevent the
fatal catastrophe which I am going
to relate.

Our unhappy friend, after the
death of his wife, could not be pre-
vailed on to eat or sleep ; not even to
enter

enter a bed. On Tuesday morning, when I had been taking pains with more assiduity than ever to persuade him to sit down to breakfast with me, a letter from Lady Wharton, who has been exceeding anxious about him, was put into my hand. I stepped into the next room, to see if there was any thing in it which might affect him too much. I am sure I had not been absent ten minutes before his servant came and told me, that his master was gone out all undressed, but that he had taken his sword with him; adding, that he had sent John after him.

I staid only to fetch my hat: I then hurried away. He was traced to the house which Bever had for some time inhabited, at about half a mile from the Park.

We rang at the gate, which was not presently opened; but as soon as we had made ourselves heard, a fellow, with his hair almost erect

with horror, came running, and informed us, that a madman had killed his master.

We hastened into the garden : Bever was bleeding on the ground, attended by his people, and Brudenel supported himself on his sword near him, looking on him with earnestness.

As soon as I appeared, Bever, pale with loss of blood, stretched out his hand to me while I ran to Brudenel.

“ You look like gentleman, Sir, said Bever, with a faint voice, but in a resolute tone. I have only a few moments to live. I deserve what has happened, and wish to exculpate Mr. Brudenel. He came to my house just now, and asked to speak with me : I was here in my garden. He followed the servant ; he met me, called me a villain, a cowardly villain, and accused me of defaming his wife ; of destroying her.
In

In reply, I told him, that I believed I had occasioned her death, by blasting her reputation. I am grieved to the soul for what I have done. A more innocent, or more virtuous, lovely creature never existed. My anguish, Sir, continued he, struggling to suppress his emotions, my anguish is not less than his.

“ You are then a cowardly villain, cried he.

“ I do not reckon myself a coward, replied I; but I will own, that I have greatly injured Mrs. Brudeneel.

“ You shall then atone for your infamous behaviour with your life, answered he, making a thrust at me.

“ I had no sword, I therefore called to him to stay till I could defend myself, but he was too distracted to listen to me; with a second *lunge* he buried his sword in my body: then, drawing it out, he,

with redoubled fury, thrust it into it into his own side. My servants very soon afterwards came about us. These are my dying words, in favour of him who has killed me. If he lives, he ought not to suffer on my account, as the provocations which he received from me were not of a nature to be tamely borne."

Here Brudenel, who had leaned on my shoulder during the above speech, cried eagerly, "You confess that my wife was virtuous." "Most virtuous," replied he with a faltering voice, and instantly expired.

By this time the surgeon, to whom the servant had been dispatched, arrived. On examining Brudenel's wound, he said it was not a dangerous one; but that he had a high fever upon him, which, added to the disorder of his mind might, he feared, prove fatal.

We

We removed him home carefully ; the surgeon dressed his wound, and ordered him to be kept very quiet ; but instead of shewing any desire to be quiet, he insisted upon my sitting by his bedside, saying, that he had but a few hours to live, and that he should be glad to talk with me calmly. Poor fellow ! he was not then very calm ; but as I believed what he said to be too true, I complied ; persuading him, however, to endeavour to take some rest.

“ I cannot think of resting any more in this world, George, replied he ; I have ardently wished to die ever since I lost my dear girl, my sweet, injured girl ; for injured, you find, she was in the highest degree ; but, as I have had my revenge, I am satisfied.”

I confess, Ned, that I was much hurt by the satisfaction which our unhappy friend, on the point of

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“ I cannot think of resting any more in this world, George, replied he ; I have ardently wished to die ever since I lost my dear girl, my sweet, injured girl ; for injured, you find, she was in the highest degree ; but, as I have had my revenge, I am satisfied.”

I confess, Ned, that I was much hurt by the satisfaction which our unhappy friend, on the point of

leaving this world, expressed in having murdered a man, though *that* man was his greatest enemy ; yet, as I imagined that I should only encrease the confusion of his ideas, by condemning his behaviour, I made a slight reply. He then went on with a degree of rationality, which surprised me after what had passed ; “ I have made my will, George : I made it before the letter I received from Bever, which occasioned my Lucy’s death. I had made a will immediately upon my marriage, in which I left her six hundred a year for her life, a thousand pounds in money, and her jewels ; but upon Hamilton’s attachment to Miss Elifon, I altered my will, and left my wife two thousand a year, and five hundred in money, appointing you and him my executors, and leaving you a thousand pounds each for your trouble ; and the remainder of my fortune, after the payment of a few

few legacies, to Hamilton. This last will, therefore, you will see duly executed. What I designed for my poor wife may be also divided between you. The jewels may be given to Miss Ellison, and"—

" Hold, my dear Brudenel, cried I, laying my hand on his, hold : compose yourself, I intreat you, I will faithfully execute the trust committed to my care, if necessary, but could you be prevailed on to keep yourself still, one might have hopes of your recovery."

" I do not wish to live ; I do not chuse to live, my dear friend. She —she for whom I have lived ever since I knew her, she is gone ; and what's the whole earth to me without her ? A barren wild, a joyless desert. Besides, as I murdered her, I ought not, on any terms, to live : those who deprive others of life, should not themselves be suffered to exist ; and since I have killed the
dearest,

dearest, kindest, loveliest creature God ever made. Oh Lucy! Lucy! Ne'er shall I look upon thy like again!"

Here, having exhausted his spirits, he sunk down upon his pillow. As he seemed to lie quiet, I flattered myself with hopes, but they soon vanished. Calling to his servant, with a faltering voice, he bade him lift him up in his bed. I can scarce breathe, added he; I feel a violent oppression.

I assisted in setting him upright. When he had been in that posture about a minute, he suddenly grasped my hand, and having said, "Farewel! 'twill soon be over," leaned back, and instantly breathed his last. I was not sufficiently myself for some time to give any orders; as soon as I recovered a little from so severe a shock, I sent to Lady Wharton, and to Captain Hamilton; desiring the latter to set out
post

post as soon as the express arrived. He came to the Park yesterday; he was exceedingly affected; he had met with enough in London indeed to distress him, for his father died the day before Brudenel, and left not a sum adequate to the demands of his family for their subsistence. His remaining sister now lies dangerously ill of a rheumatic fever, which will, 'tis thought, settle in her legs, and render her lame for the rest of her life. He spoke nobly of our poor, deceased friend, and lamented his sister in very pathetic terms, wishing she had not been so unfortunate to Brudenel. " Lucy, added he, was certainly to blame at her first setting out; but for Bever's scandalous behaviour, productive of so much misery to an innocent creature, no apology can be made. Were men but to consider to what disagreeable situations they expose themselves, by attempting to seduce

seduce women from the paths of virtue, and into what distresses they plunge the pretended objects of their love, they would surely act in a more honourable manner in their connection with the female world : let me also say, that no girl, however regardless she may be of the censure or praise of either sex, or however fondly she may love the man who has insinuated himself into her heart, can prudently put herself in his power before marriage." To these reflections I readily subscribed, because I thought them just, and I sincerely hope, that every young lady, who is acquainted with Mrs. Brudenel's history, will be warned by *her* example, not to suffer her inclination to militate against her duty, nor to revolt against discretion.

Our poor unfortunate friends are to be interred in one grave. When the funeral is over I shall return to you.

you. Captain Hamilton, who by his whole behaviour upon this melancholy occasion, has proved himself to be a man of nice honour, and of a refined understanding, with delicate sentiments, and the most feeling heart in the world, will set out for Windsor immediately, to join his Maria; as she alone is capable of affording any, the least consolation to him.

T H E E N D.